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architecture california
the journal of the american institute of architects
california council

aiacc design awards issue

01.1



awarding honor

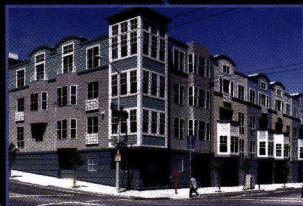
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Comment

Long ago and far away, when I was in architecture school, I attended a presentation by a visiting L.A. architect. From the tiers of the former medical theater that served as the school's main lecture hall, we looked down on a large, upright cardboard box, the sort a refrigerator comes in. The lights went down, a single slide projector beam, *sans* image, shone on the box, and a voice began: "Architecture is the magnificent play of forms in light."

Then, wham! From inside, something smacked the box. The projector beam went off and flashed back on. Again the voice: "Architecture is frozen music." Wham! Flash! "Architecture is..." And over the course of a hundred comparable pronouncements, Coy Howard slugged his way out of that box. Or almost did.

Some of us are still slugging, and some of us have spent the years gluing up sheets of cardboard (literally or figuratively) to define architecture.

In my capacity as copy editor, I inquired of one of this issue's authors what is intended by the term "rigor." I have from time to time suspected that when people call for rigor, what they're looking for is the greater conformance of a peg to its hole. And our author does allow as how the term derives from the Latin for "rigid."

The question then arises, do we award good fit, or a good hit—the satisfaction of expectations or the fist punching through the envelope? Professional journals—at least those, like this one, promulgated by professional organizations—are not in the business of suggesting radical answers to such questions, but we may note the dilemma.

By no means does the question diminish the accomplishments of the Design Awards winners featured here. The question is not about the quality of particular projects, but about what categories of endeavor we consider worthy. And this is

a question we will, as we should, continue to ask ourselves. Accordingly, around the featured projects are articles that look at the process of redefining the Design Awards program itself, that consider changes over time in *Sunset* magazine's awards, and that review the curatorial choices of a recent exhibition. There are also more immediately practical suggestions for future applicants, as well as a look at a house that once tied for ninth place.

Our hope is that you may find something to applaud, something to holler about, something to remark upon one way or the other. **arcCA**'s "Correspondence" section has returned after an issue's absence, and I want to keep it filled. Because otherwise the editorial life is a lonesome, garreted one, and aside from press releases (lively reading), the only correspondence I can count on are e-messages from our editorial board, ending with remarks along the lines of "BTW, IMHO, the adjective 'frisky' ought properly to be applied only to nonagenarians and terriers."

"IMHO," indeed. Not that I don't enjoy a well-argued point of diction, now and again. But you follow my drift. So please keep writing. ●

Tim Culvahouse, editor

p.s. Speaking of awards, we are honored to report that **arcCA** won first place in the "Most Improved Magazine/Journal" category of the American Society of Association Executives' Gold Circle Awards for the year 2000. Look for **arcCA** t-shirts, based on our new graphics, coming soon, and support our continued improvement.

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John Loomis, AIA, is Chair of the Department of Architecture at CCAC and an executive editor of *Design Book Review*. He is the author of *The Architecture of Revolution: Cuba's Forgotten Art Schools* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1998) and of the forthcoming *A House for Weston Havens* by Harwell Hamilton Harris.

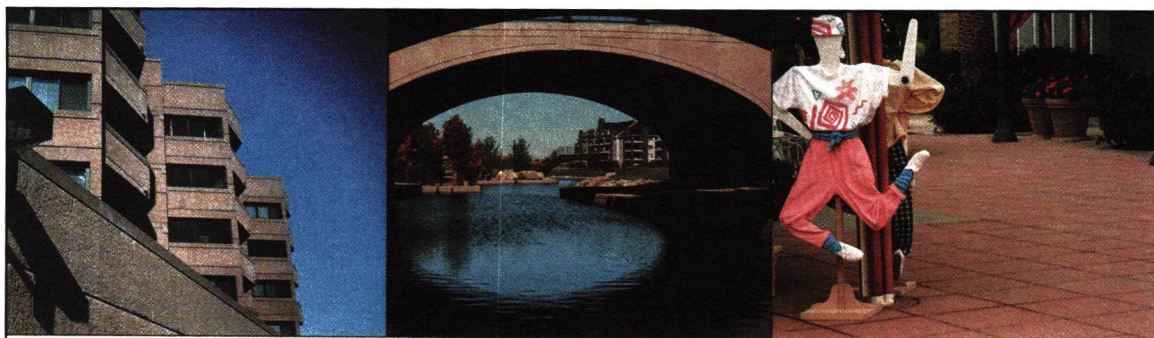
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Buzz Yudell, FAIA, is Adjunct Professor in the School of the Arts and Architecture at UCLA, a partner in the firm of Moore, Ruble, Yudell in Santa Monica, and a member of the *arcCA* editorial board.

Anne Zimmerman, AIA, is principal of AZ Architecture Studio in Santa Monica, a firm focusing on quality design for the public realm and the underserved, inspired by place and urban issues. She is a member of the *arcCA* editorial board.



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2001 INSTITUTE HONOR AWARD

by the American Institute of Architects Awards were the furthest thing from our minds. The Los Angeles Homeless Drop-In Center was built for our homeless brothers and sisters.



MAY IT INSPIRE OTHERS.

Correspondence

Editor/

The importance of print graphic design was really brought home to me as I read the revamped *Architecture California*, 00.1, "Zoning Time." I have received the magazine for many years, and this issue was the first one where the graphic design alone compelled me to read the entire issue. Congratulations to your graphics team.

Dennis Schmidt, AIA, Gensler, San Francisco

Editor/

I was intrigued by the graphics on the cover to thumb through the new magazine (00.1, "Zoning Time"). I ended up reading it cover to cover without putting it down. Interesting articles, fabulous format. "Correspondence": some ruffled feathers there. The lead article interspersed with comments by members (the two colors work great). The profiles were most interesting and well done. The "Timeless Structures" evoked memories of past visits and conjured others—Scotty's Castle and the Balboa Pavilion. I was with Jim Jennings when he took the photo of the Daphne mortuary. He knew that A.Q. Jones had been my mentor and arranged the visit for me. I thought his commentary was priceless. The old *Architecture California* may have had worthwhile articles, but the format was so deadly dull that it was put aside for future reading that did not happen. Looking forward to the next issue. Keep up the great work.

George Bissell, FAIA, Newport Beach

Editor/

It is seldom that I write a magazine to congratulate them on raising the level of dialogue within our professional community, but it is rare when a journal is so thoroughly transformed as the recent revamping of *arcCA*. I would like to extend my thanks to McGraw-Hill, the editorial board for upping the content, and the designers for the new look. All are contributing to what is undeniably an unqualified success. Great job—I look forward to a long and happy run.

**Nick Seierup, AIA, Director of Design, Perkins & Will,
Los Angeles**

Editor/

Congratulations on your new publication, which is lively and relevant. In particular, we read with interest Aaron Betsky's essay on Silicon Valley and its emerging "monuments" (*arcCA* 00.2, "Common Ground"). As master planners and landscape architects for such projects as Silicon Graphics, with Studios Architects, and Electronic Arts, with SOM, we fully concur with the author's observations that outdoor spaces are essential elements of these campus projects.

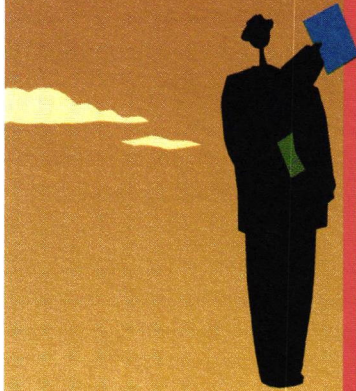
We must not, however, be satisfied with these isolated successes. The fragmented nature of Silicon Valley's high tech building boom has done little to improve the overall character of this sprawling suburban place. As architects, landscape architects, and planners, we must work harder to "connect the dots" and engage in the larger public realm of streets, parks, drainageways, and the spaces between buildings. We must insist that the "threads of communal landscape," as Betsky calls them, are part of every project. Public agency planners must likewise take a strong stance on project conditions that leverage private investment into public improvements—beautiful streets, walkways, parks, and natural areas. This is beginning to happen, for instance with San Jose's Guadalupe River, at SGI where the city's required five-acre park connects seamlessly to the corporate headquarters, and at Electronic Arts with its public "green swaths" running through the project. Only with purposeful design vision and effective collaboration between owners, designers, and public agencies will the great wealth of Silicon Valley build the public landscape that it should.

William Callaway, President, SWA Group, Sausalito

Editor/

I enjoyed reading the latest *arcCA* (00.2, "Common Ground"). As an urban designer, I am pleased to see the issue of urbanization approached with such subtlety. I am particularly pleased to see the excerpts from "You Have to Pay for the Public Life." I had the opportunity to work for Charles Moore, beginning in 1967, off and on for the next two years. Chuck often described himself as a "little house" architect, yet in

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Correspondence

"You Have to Pay for the Public Life" he expressed one of the most vexing problems in creating urban spaces: we all want it, but who will pay for it?

Today, the symbols of urbanism are being created for theme parks (Universal City Walk) and Las Vegas casinos. The "New (sub)Urbanists" are selling the idea that early turn of the century (19th to 20th and not 20th to 21st) development will save our souls. I believe that part of the problem we face in creating urban-style development is that we do not understand how to build for urban settings. While we have been very good at dealing with *utilitas* and may at times provide *venustas*, we have been unable to establish any *firmitas*. Among typical American cities, only Manhattan is built of lasting materials (i.e., not wood frame). The wood frame house is impermanent, susceptible to fire and insect damage, and totally lacking in sound and energy insulation. The federal government—through FHA and Ginny Mae/Fannie Mae—continues to support the building of impermanent shelter. It is akin to the planned obsolescence of the big American cars of the '50s and '60s. It may cost a bit more to build as if we mean it, but, in the long run, it will be less expensive. I hope you may tackle this issue in a future edition.

By the way, I attended UCLA Graduate School of Architecture and Urban Planning, partially as a result of Chuck's recommendation that I would find it supportive of my interests in planning and urban design. While he added much to the luster of the school, beginning in 1973-74, he did not found UIG. The Urban Innovations Group had been founded a couple of years earlier by Ralph Iredale, under the direction of Dean Harvey Perloff.

Manuel E. Perez, AIA, Long Beach

California State Architect Steve Castellanos offers the following thoughts for the current issue. -Editor

How do architects view design compared to individual clients and the public in general? Are the goals of design professionals matched with the goals of their clients? Do architects and clients use common assessment tools when evaluating performance and success?

Business, education and our institutions rely greatly on architects and the buildings they create to house

important activities. These buildings are tools, and clients measure success in terms that relate directly to the experience of the user and the success of the endeavor. Buildings are expensive tools, and there is great awareness that the investment risk can best be minimized through a rigorous programming effort, a design process that includes the broadest range of stakeholders and external inputs, and a thorough evaluation process, designed to inform the user with regard to design intent as well as to close the information loop on the design and construction process.

Architects and their clients hold a common set of values but are far apart on how they communicate those values. For too long, architects have published thin and skimpy articles in the design press that focus more on aesthetic issues and less on the performance and experience of the user. Award programs often are juried with exterior images as the primary submittal and the best images win. As a social art and science, architecture has a greater obligation to serve society, and architects should work continually to better partner with clients, especially large public clients, in recognition of the transformational impacts of very large capital budgets. As a major public client, California invests billions annually in public buildings and schools, yet very little is understood about the changes that occur in the design and construction marketplace resulting from such a large investment.

Architects must participate in the life of buildings post-occupancy, through a program of assessment. Architects should move to recognition programs that reward what the real product of a successful design effort is—the positive and productive experience of the user. Then and only then will architects, their clients, and the public be joined as equal partners in creating our built environment.

Architecture defines who we are as a culture today and for generations to come. Creating meaningful buildings is a serious and difficult undertaking, requiring a rigorous process and continual assessment. Our goal should be buildings that successfully combine delight and performance, are flexible, and contribute to communities throughout their lives.

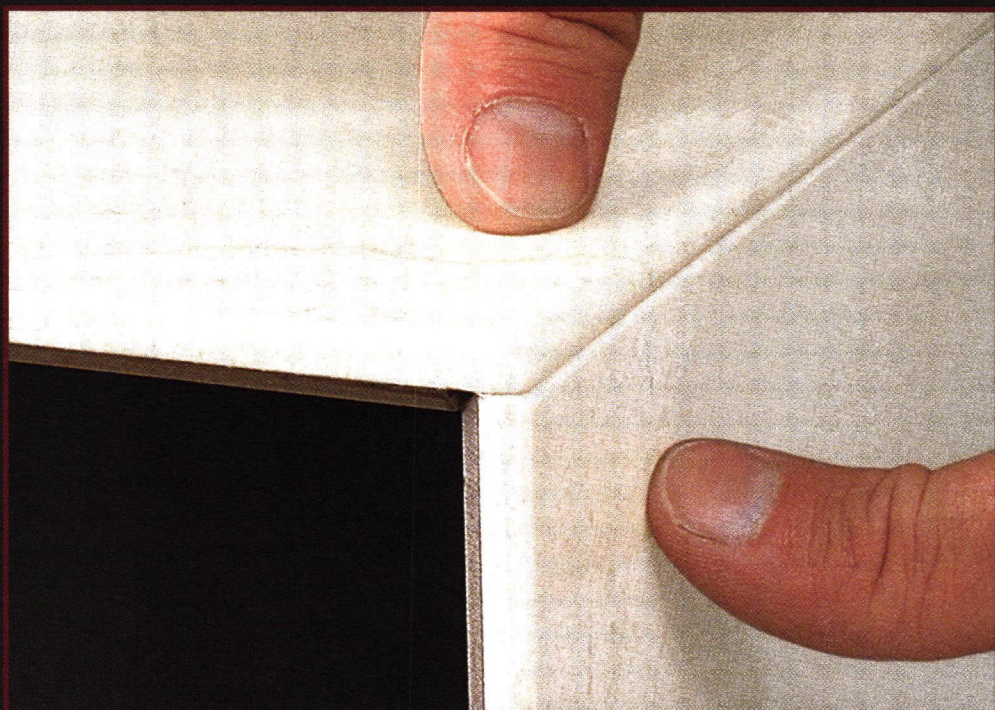
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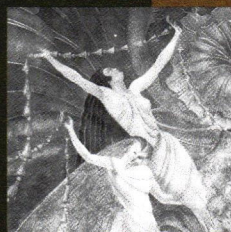
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P R O G R A M





Awarding

Honor

Barton Phelps, FAIA

Anyone who has ever entered an AIA design awards program knows the vast amount of work and expense it can devour. Anxiety about what to show and what to write drags the process out like self-inflicted water torture. Entrants wrestle with how to communicate—in a flash—the significance of years of work. The unseen jurors, luminary architects from around the country, range in disposition from friendly to satanic.

On the receiving end, the jury faces an opposing dilemma. The conscientious juror (most are, I think) wonders how, in the space of a day or two, to comprehend honestly the form and operations—let alone the full significance—of three hundred or so hard-wrought but variously skewed entries. Then there is the challenge of hacking out some sort of meaningful consensus with three or four other strong-willed designer/critics, any two of whose approaches might claim polar opposition. Reports of the antics of certain jurors, ugly confrontations and famous refusals to abide by the rules, even sudden disappearances are legendary. The possibilities for wonderfully varied arrays of winners as well as for disconnects, meltdowns, and

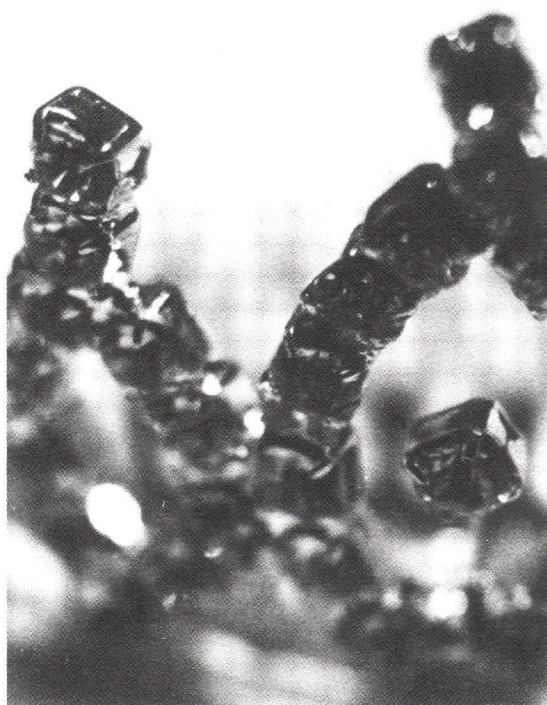
weird results are equally present in this old fashioned, long-distance dialogue between entrant and jury.

Notoriously flawed dynamics notwithstanding, busy architects continue to offer up their psychic and professional energies to programs like the AIACC 2000 Design Awards, doggedly following the circuit of annual competitive events. The display of talent and energy that is generated is impressive and laudable but, given the actual payoff, one has to suspect that the real attraction would make for interesting psychological diagnosis. Apart from the exhilaration that triumphant award recipients deservedly feel, the process often verges on anticlimax for entrants and observers alike. Winning is probably the only antidote for having no sense of what actually transpired in the traditionally closed-door deliberations. Except in cases where jurors appear to be close mental clones, the results of the jury often remain curious—tainted by suspicions of brokering, begging for thoughtful analysis that seldom follows.

Part of the problem seems to reside with the dynamics of the jury and its members' differing takes on architectural judgment and artistic elitism. Often, however, confusion about results can be traced back beyond the jury to a lack of clarity in the intentions of the awards program itself. The AIA has been trying to perfect its aims for these events since the first annual Honor Awards program was held in 1949. Occasionally since then, organizers of awards programs have taken time to try to figure out what it all means.

One attempt occurred a few years back at the national AIA level when the Awards Task Group of the Committee on Design was asked to respond to member dissatisfaction with the Honor Awards. It was the familiar litany of complaints about juries—limited receptivity to many types of work, bias toward projects with prior recognition and their well-known authors, conscious de-emphasis of practical issues, and so on. The solution proposed by the disgruntled was the creation of more awards—usually in the form of programs limited to highly specialized building types on which their own practices focussed.

Fearful of runaway awards proliferation and a lessening of the true distinction of Honor Awards, the task group scrambled for alternatives. As a first step, the group read the official "Call for Entries" with an eye for truth in advertising. When



its wide open invitation, with its suggestion that all types of projects have an equal chance of winning, was compared with lists of actual recent winners, it became obvious that the problem required a more fundamental response. The overall intentions and operations of the awards program needed clarification for both entrants and jurors.

While some would argue that judgments of architectural quality justifiably operate outside the realm of rational analysis, this particular task group included veteran jurors and award winners who were willing to broaden the definition of exemplary architectural activity. The old empowering slogan of connoisseurship—*the work of art transcends*

the artist—was found less useful than the much hipper post-structuralist motto—*all interpretation is mis-interpretation*.

In the end, the task group sought ways to lessen jury autonomy by increasing the precision of communication between entrants and jurors. It urged adoption of a more carefully structured approach both to jury operations and to the dissemination of the results. Many of their recommendations, notably the switch from building types to types of design emphasis—technical, societal, environmental, historic, formal innovation—have been implemented to one degree or another in the AIA design awards programs at the national and component levels. Here are some observations that emerged from those discussions:

Intentions

Two distinct sets of intentions—*internalizing and externalizing*—are served by design awards programs. Internalizing intentions focus attention on exemplary architectural activity in order to inform other architects and elevate the general quality of practice (an act of sharing). They also establish a standard of excellence against which architects can measure their own performance (comparing). These mechanisms are played down in many calls for entries in favor of externalizing intentions that view exemplary projects as way of informing non-architects (read “potential clients”) about architecture and its usefulness and value. The latter discussion often appears under the misleading and arrogant-sounding rubric of “educating the public.”

* Emphasizing “sharing” and “comparing” for other architects requires careful structuring of the selection process, the means of recognition, and the dissemination of results.

The Dilemma of the Entrant

Entrants may be largely unaware of the specific intentions of the awards program, the meaning of terms like “design excellence,” the operations of the jury, and the procedural implications of the very large number of entries that the jury must review. Jurors complain that many submitters do not adequately describe the particular distinctions of their projects and the process that produced them, probably because of uncertainty as to which kinds of

information are most useful to the jury.

* In order to shift emphasis to “sharing” and “comparing,” entrants need to assume a larger responsibility for directing the jury’s attention to the distinguishing characteristics of their approach to the projects submitted, thus giving greater specificity to the jury’s evaluation. Building types are arbitrary and inadequate as a way of directing the jury’s consideration.

* Projects do not need to be innovative to be good. Design resolution can be distinguished from design advancement. Either of these categories can emphasize specific review criteria such as technical, societal, environmental, historic preservation achievements, or others.

Jury Operations

Once empanelled, juries tend to reconstruct themselves. In the absence of clearly stated objectives, jurors may feel the need to debate the intentions of the awards program in order to establish a value structure to guide their deliberations. If no continuity exists between successive juries, the same issues may result in the same controversies year after year—for example the arguments pro and con about the equivalence of historic preservation to the design of new buildings. While not insignificant, these discussions reduce already limited time available for a thorough review of the entries.

* Jury Guidelines should include recommendations as to juror commitment, thoroughness of project reviews by each juror, rigor, criteria for consideration, the role of the chair, and the selection of materials for recognition/dissemination.

Recognition and Dissemination

Recognition of award winning work is usually inadequate to fulfill the intentions of the program, and overblown promotional ceremonies may devalue the awards.

* In addition to announcement/publication of winners, an awards symposium involving winners, jurors, and invited commentators should critically review the range of winners and the issues the program raises.

* A record publication devoted to the awards program and its results (like this issue of *arcCA*) should follow. ●



thank you for submitting...

Advice
to
the
Award-lorn

David Meckel, FAIA

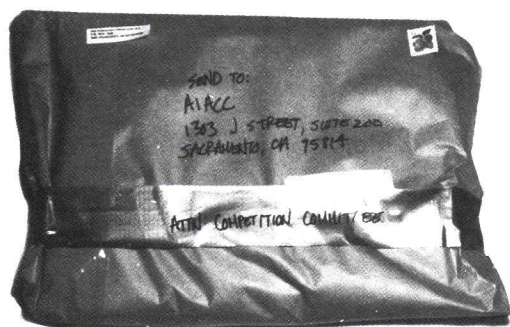
If you have been unsuccessful in your attempts to win a design award for your work, you might reasonably conclude that the projects that do get chosen to receive awards are selected either as a result of a worldwide conspiracy mounted against you and your firm, or, worse yet, pre-determined even before anyone sends in their entry fees. Having participated numerous times as a juror, a recipient, and more recently as an observer of a number of design awards programs, I find myself in a position to dispel the fears of bias, conspiracies, and fate and replace them with some common sense about how to submit your work.

Excellence

First, the bad news. Generally, only great design work wins design awards. If your project's primary asset is energy conservation, submit it to an energy awards program unless it also has spectacular architectural design, then submit it to both. Design jurors take their responsibility very seriously and are extremely careful in their selections to insure that every awarded project exhibits an extraordinary level of design excellence. Jurors are as rigorous in their selection process as they are in their own design work. In fact, they often view their selection as a reflection on their own standards and reputations, which, of course, no one takes lightly.

Strength

Don't worry about the jury composition. Again, good work wins awards. Poor work does not. Submitting work that you think looks like something a particular juror might appreciate



should not be your motivation. In fact, issues of particular styles, languages, and forms almost never get discussed, because the focus of the deliberations are typically more fundamental than that. Instead, urban design/site planning/social innovation, plan/section ingenuity, and technological/craft issues tend to dominate the discourse. Therefore, submit work because you feel it is strong, and present it so the jury can recognize that.

Participation

Have someone from the project's design team participate in writing and assembling the submission. While there are many talented marketing and business development people in firms, design awards are given by a jury of designers, and your presentation should be crafted to speak to that audience on a very professional level. Be sure to be generous in crediting all parties who participated in helping realize the project. And follow all the rules. Obvious oversights, such as the firm name being visible on a slide, have eliminated many submittals from even being considered.

Clarity

Provide the jury with all the basic visual information they need to understand the project. This sounds obvious, but many submittals create a huge challenge for the jurors to figure out what it is that they are supposed to evaluate. For

instance, if the project is an addition to an existing place or structure, show this clearly with before and after photographs or simple, clear diagrams. In last year's AIACC Design Awards, there was only one submittal that used graphic parti diagrams to explain the scheme's intentions. Assume nothing. In fact, test your slides on someone who doesn't know the project and say nothing. This is how the jury gets their first look.

Simplicity

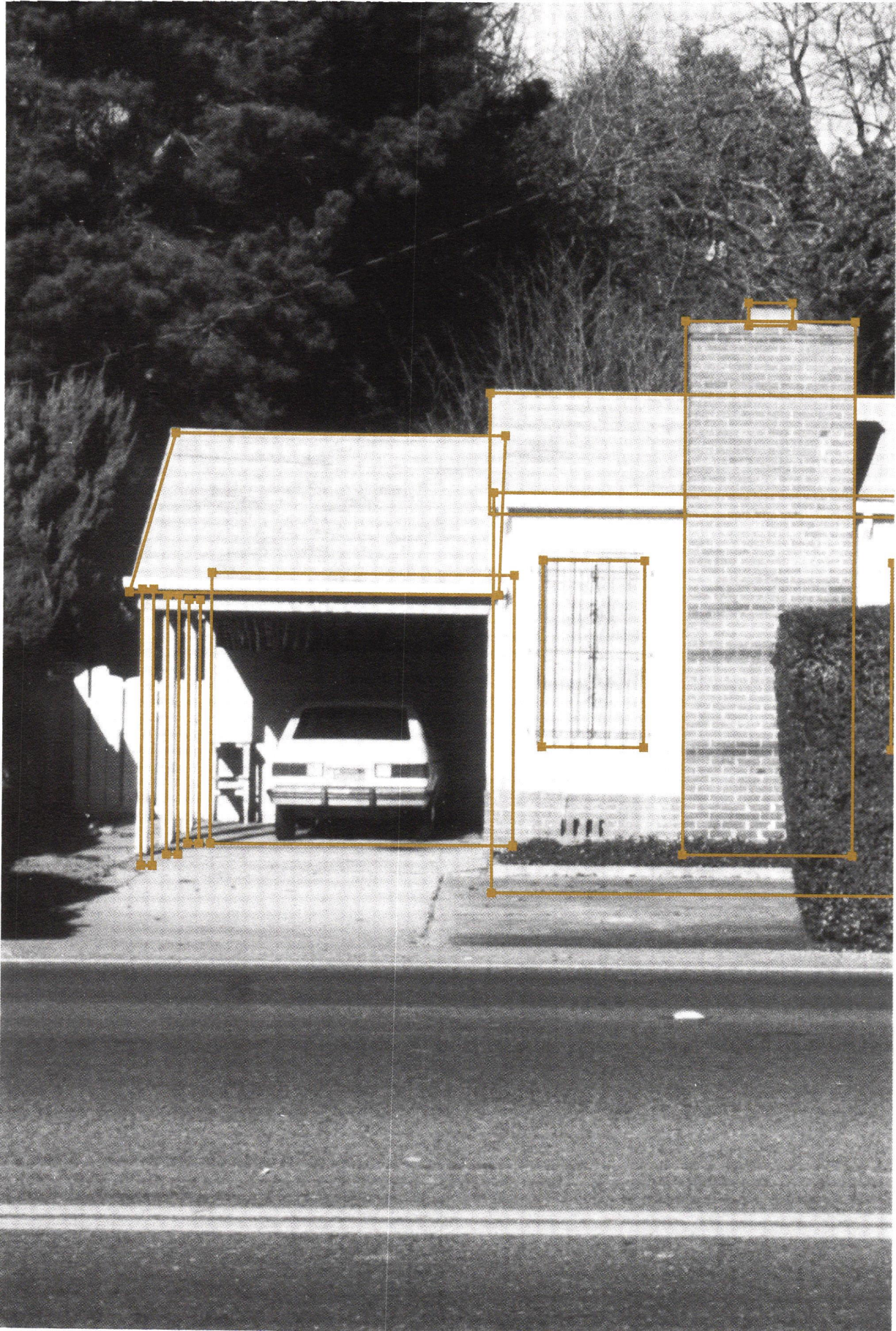
Write simply and clearly without hyperbole. I realize this is something that doesn't come naturally to us, but we need to improve our abilities in this area. After two hundred or so project statements are read to the jury with each submittal touting its design as timeless, innovative, forward looking, contextual, and client responsive, the jurors long for simple, informative statements that complement the slides they're looking at while these words are read. Think about the forces that shaped the project that are not visible in the slides, and use this opportunity to reveal them. These forces could include anything from cost constraints to community process.

Images

Use photographs that actually show the project in use. Since the jurors usually can't visit the projects, this is a great way to show them that your theories work in practice and to reveal aspects of the projects that are only evident when people occupy the spaces. A staircase that gets used as an impromptu amphitheater at an elementary school, a translucent wall that is animated by people moving behind it, a view out to a landscape vignette that is only visible once someone sits down are examples of the types of information that jurors will not understand without images to support these designed experiences.

Resubmit

Always resubmit. Every jury is different and every pool of entries is different. 350 entries that only include 15 affordable housing projects make a jury hunger for that building type and review those submittals extra carefully. Since you can't control the mix, resubmitting a project two or three times is a good strategy. You've already done all the work to put the presentation together, so recoup some of the investment by using it more than once: submit it at local, state, and national levels in AIA, industry specific, government, and magazine awards programs. Let the rejections be like water off a duck's back. Keep doing what you think is the best work you can do, and keep submitting it. ●



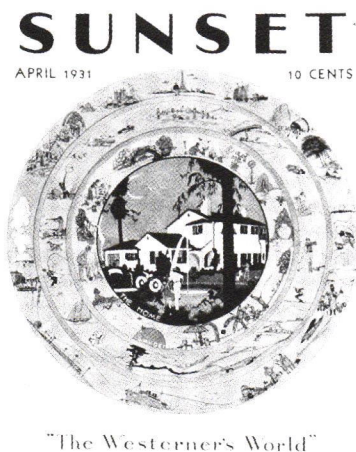
Sunset

and the Changing Western Home

Daniel Gregory, Ph.D.

For an issue on architectural awards in California, it seems appropriate to reflect on one of the region's oldest such programs, which is run by *Sunset* magazine. Officially called the AIA-*Sunset* Western Home Awards Program, it began in 1957 and runs every odd year. The questions we might ask in reference to this program are the age-old ones: how are awards made, and how have architectural values, and in this case homes, changed over the years. But first, some context.

At *Sunset*, which was founded by the Southern Pacific Railroad in 1898, the home has always been an important subject. In the early years of the 20th century there was a monthly department called "The Home in the West," and articles like "The Maybeck One-Room House" appeared occasionally in the 1910s and 1920s. But reporting on "The Changing Western Home" (which ultimately became a trademarked headline, used to this day) really flourished in the pages of *Sunset* after the magazine was sold to the Lane family in 1928. The cover for April of 1931 brings the subject into perfect focus: a Spanish Colonial Revival-style (i.e. western) house occupies the center of a bull's eye, surrounded by the



magazine's other editorial departments: Food, Garden, and Travel. Clearly, homeowners were the target audience: they would need the magazine's advice and had the disposable income that advertisers sought. It was a formula for success that remains essentially true to this day under the ownership of Time Warner.

As a regional magazine looking for ideas to help its readers adapt to what was essentially an empty, arid land, *Sunset* ultimately sought innovative, functional, and regional solutions to everyday problems—from siting a house to building a barbecue. Many figures helped shape the magazine's architectural bent. Ranch house popularizer Cliff May was foremost: his rambling houses integrated structure and site in a way that was perceived to be vividly western and contemporary without being cold or austere. Cliff May was himself a fan of Frank Lloyd Wright, whose ability to combine progressive design ideas with a sense of romance experienced a renaissance in the late 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s.

In a sense, May and Wright helped inspire *Sunset*'s architectural orientation. Here's a quick story to illustrate. Wright came to visit *Sunset*'s new headquarters, designed by Cliff May with gardens by San Francisco landscape architect Thomas Church, in 1954, after a lecture at Stanford. But he refused to get out of the car because he didn't like what he saw. Luckily for *Sunset*, he had been taken to the wrong address, an insurance company not far away. His driver, who was Mrs. Hanna—owner of the famous Wright-designed Hanna honeycomb house of 1937—finally arrived at *Sunset*, and Wright disembarked without incident.

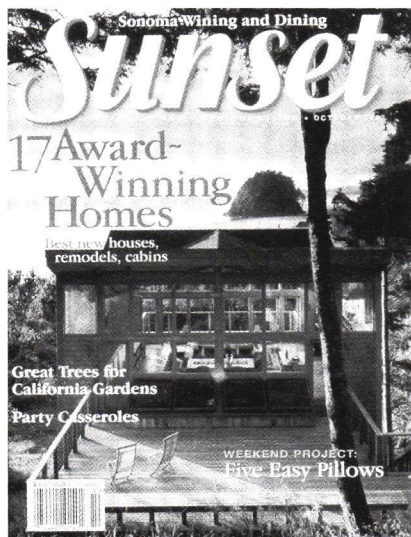
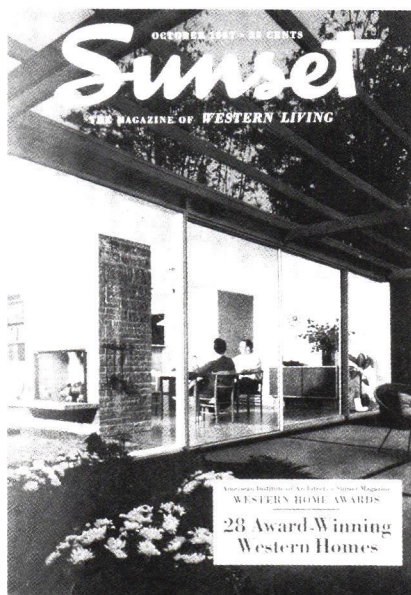
After his tour, led by the publishing company's owners Bill and Mel Lane and editor Proctor Mellquist, he pronounced it one of the best office structures he had ever visited. Not surprisingly, he liked the way the building reflected some of the ideas that he had championed over his long career, such as the continuity of paving material between inside and outside and the way structure and landscape formed a seamless whole. According to Bill Lane, there was only one thing Wright didn't like: the rough terra cotta floors. Wright was used to the highly polished concrete floors at Taliesin West, which he could shuffle over with ease (he was 87 at the time). Needless to say, publisher and editor were charmed and

delighted; Wright's visit was a confirmation of their success.

Today, *Sunset*'s office building is considered a classic early example of environmental design. Its overscaled ranch house esthetic of adobe walls, patios, long overhangs, expansive lawn, and long garden border tracing a metaphoric outline of the Pacific Coast comprise an emblematic setting for a publishing company devoted to the celebration of living well in the West. It was the perfect regionally inspired shelter for this regional shelter magazine. Indeed, as Proctor Mellquist once told me, "You know Disneyland's Main Street. It's an urban design at 7/8 scale. Well, *Sunset* is just the opposite: a residential design at 9/8 scale." For both, imagery and the connection to a popular architectural idiom were very important. *Sunset*'s building was, ingeniously, meant to bring the magazine to life.

An architectural awards program seemed the logical next step as a way of highlighting the latest ideas in home design. In 1957, the magazine joined with the Western regional branches of the American Institute of Architects to sponsor the AIA-*Sunset* Western Home Awards Program. Today the jury consists of the *Sunset* Home staff and four architects who have previously won awards in the program. The jury convenes at *Sunset* headquarters over two days and typically reviews 350 to 400 binders from across the West, in categories ranging from remodelings and restorations to new houses and townhouse developments. Discussions are usually frank and energetic as the jury evaluates the originality, skill, functionality, comfort, and regional responsiveness of the work under review.

A remarkable continuity of concepts is apparent in the winners over the years. One particularly consistent interest of both the magazine and the juries is in making the most out of limited means. This was true in 1957 and is even more urgently true today, though there are always exceptions. A headline from the 1977 program captures the principle succinctly: "Painstaking design makes small spaces live larger than they really are." The 1999 program gave awards to three winning houses of under 1,000 square feet and to an owner-built, 1,100 square foot house that cost \$100,000. The same program also awarded a sculptural, 5,000+ square foot house on an unlimited budget that included a special structure



described as a “car wash.”

Conceptual consistency is most strikingly illustrated by comparing the first awards cover of 1957 with one from 40 years later. The earlier image depicts a wood and glass box—a sort of a Philip Johnsonesque glass house made of red cedar. It was a \$14,000, three bedroom, one bath subdivision house in Kirkland, Washington, by Seattle architect Paul Hayden Kirk. Its all-glass rear façade appeared to double the size of the modest house by incorporating the landscape into its design. It was modern, but a wood trellis gave it warmth. The house on the 1997 cover is also a wood and glass box. This time it’s a

vacation house built as a retreat for the architectural firm that designed it, Boora Architects of Portland. Though the type of house is not the same, the concept is: again, continuity between inside and outside is the key. The house becomes a lens for the view, expanding through glass walls to incorporate the Oregon coastline.

As would be expected, and in line with national trends, the overall size and complexity of the western house—as seen in the entries—has increased, even as lot sizes have decreased. Family rooms, great rooms, eat-in kitchens, home offices, media rooms, mud rooms, and exercise rooms have all added to the sophistication and square footage of the early 21st century home, whether new or remodeled. The rise of historic preservation has broadened the appreciation of a diversity of architectural traditions. The open plan has spawned such new developments as the quiet dishwasher. Universal design principles are more evident. Energy conservation and the use of “green” materials have burgeoned, reinvigorating such age-old traditions as rammed-earth construction. And broader interest in interior design has led us to launch a new biennial awards program, jointly sponsored with the American Society of Interior Designers, which is open to interior designers and architects alike. All of which means that the premiated designs of today reflect a vastly more varied array of influences than the award winners of decades ago.

Today’s economic realities and our overcrowded western landscape have necessarily narrowed the magazine’s overall monthly focus to the details of western living. Now, more than ever, we look for ideas that help readers make more out of less space, time, and energy. Now, it’s not new houses but the remodeling, interior design and decorating, and woodworking projects that form the core of our home coverage. These are the subjects about which most of our 1,430,000 subscribers and 5,000,000 readers seek help. At the same time, the Western Home Awards Program remains a key editorial element for *Sunset* because it stimulates architectural thinking, which is a form of problem solving. It helps readers analyze what they might do in their own homes. I like to think of an awards program as a kind of pattern book for western living. And it keeps our editorial standards high. ●



The Ultimate Design

Musing On "At the End of the Century: One Hundred Years of Architecture"

The Museum of Contemporary Art, Geffen Contemporary

April 16 through September 24, 2000

Award?

Camille M. Kirk

“One Hundred Years of Architecture” was a colossal show, as ambitious, provocative and fragmented as the century it explored. A wealth of detailed material documenting our built and unbuilt 20th century, with comparatively little context provided, the exhibit was as much about our end-of-century state of mind as about a century of built environment.

Design awards, like other exercises in popular artistic judgment such as the Oscars, have become a staple of our culture. These awards necessarily reflect the judgments of a particular moment in time, and, accordingly, shifts in cultural taste, academic theory, and political importance affect award decisions. Our awareness of such influences should not render awards suspect or meaningless; rather, the awards offer us a device by which we can better understand ourselves and our times.

Perhaps this observation sheds light on “At the End of the Century: One Hundred Years of Architecture.” The title of the show suggests that it was not intended to be an objective survey of the century, but rather an end-of-century reflection. In some sense, the show was the ultimate design award for the architect practicing in the 20th century; some “made the cut” and some were marginalized. How and why were the choices of inclusion and exclusion made? What do these choices tell us about our end-of-century viewpoint?

Structuring An Exhibition

A tour de force of interpretive assemblage by its

co-curators, Richard Koshalek and Elizabeth A. T. Smith, the show was five years in the making and traveled for two years. The way in which the show was conceived, curated, and exhibited outlines contemporary scholarly understanding of the last 100 years. Organized around thematic groupings, the show started by presenting the grand city planning visions that characterize the dawning of the 20th century, then proceeded to lead the viewer through a chronology of the century.

In an interview, Smith described the creative process behind Koshalek's idea to do a survey of 20th century architecture. In order to make sense of the vast array of possibilities, Koshalek and Smith first shaped a conceptual framework with some basic themes and identified various projects to represent those concepts. They then sought an advisory team of scholars to assist them in refining the themes and identifying appropriate examples of work to represent the thematic elements of the show. The team's debate and conflict shaped both the curatorial process and the resulting show. For instance, there was intense argument over whether the show should look at the built environment as a whole, or specific buildings as moments of High Architecture. Ultimately, the show does both, highlighting an important tension of the 20th century.

The show was exhibited in Tokyo, Mexico City, Cologne, Chicago, and Los Angeles. Each mounting differed to some degree from the others in material presented, although the basic themes of the show more or less adhered throughout. There was also a different spatial layout at each of the venues. The curating team built on each show, learning lessons from the previous one, trying new things and creating regionally appropriate layouts. For instance, the Chicago show culminated with the skyscraper, whereas the Los Angeles show used the skyscraper as a pivot.

As can happen in traveling exhibits, not all of the lending institutions would allow their materials to travel for the full two years. Thus, part of the staging involved complex determinations of what materials would be exhibited at which of the five venues. To compensate for this constraint, the curators employed a strategy of bringing in regional architects and architecture specific to each venue. The curatorial team used the artifact substitutions as opportunities to showcase regional emphases, to lend a sense of interpretive comprehension for the layperson, and to give greater exposure to lesser-known architects and projects, such as with Latin American architecture in Mexico City.

At the Geffen, Los Angeles architects were heavily represented in the end of the century sections of the show, again in keeping with curatorial strategy to exhibit regional architects, as well as to showcase developments in architecture undertaken during the groundbreaking post World War II period in Los Angeles.

But what about the architects who were missing or were not strongly represented in the show? As one person put it: "Were the Postmodernists just too passé?" And, it is precisely these sorts of questions about "missing" buildings and architects that reveal to us what we currently consider lasting achievements versus what we feel may prove ephemeral.

Interpretations of The 20th Century Tectonic Impulse

Although, as Smith acknowledges, depth is lost in this sort of survey show, breadth is gained. The show never actually expresses any sort of metanarrative about the 20th century built environment. (It is left to the viewer to construct such a tale.) Smith and Koshalek did not want to tell just one story of the century. For one thing, such an effort would have defied a core lesson of the late 20th century, when crafting grandiose explanative narratives came to be seen in the same light as building grandiose projects—as examples of tectonic hubris.

Nevertheless, the show seems to have captured an underlying end-of-century nostalgia for earlier Big Architecture, surefooted proposals, and a public faith in the importance of architecture. The immense power of architecture to shape people's daily lives and experience of their world was felt in



such sections as mass-produced housing, transportation, city planning, and the rational kitchen. Reflexively, political, economic, and social power has made architecture in its image: the sections on monumentality, new capital city building, skyscrapers, and entertainment complexes demonstrated how architecture serves power. From an end-of-century perspective, the megalomaniac side of architecture is never far submerged, and it broke loose many times throughout the 20th century.

The show also highlighted enduring tensions of the 20th century through juxtaposition of thematic sections. Two stand out. The first is one of the 20th century's defining contradictions: the increasingly developed sense of the self coupled with the submersion of the individual in mass-produced solutions. This contradiction is reified in residential architecture. Mass housing seems on the face of things to deny individuality, yet the houses of Levittown or Carquinez Heights, placed on small plots of land and then customized over the years by their owners, also seem to offer certain inventive possibili-

ties for the individual. In contrast, some highly experimental single-family houses seem to allow no room for their occupants' modifying expressions of individuality. The juxtaposition of mass housing solutions and highly refined residential experiments in the exhibit serves to highlight this complex tension that continues to fascinate us.

A second abiding tension is that between concepts of "space" and "place." The show underscored the dialectic in the 20th century between space-based design solutions and place-based design solutions. Ranging from the predominantly space-based ordering schemes of transportation and urban planning systems that dominated much of 20th century architecture, to primarily place-based solutions found in some of the residential and ecologically site-sensitive architecture, the show demonstrates that the dialectic between the solutions is constant. As we enter the new millennium, we still struggle to find synthesis between these two solutions, and the exhibit reflected that enduring interest. ●

Comparing Categories

Do the categories we use to organize our thoughts merely reflect our values, or do they shape them? Both, perhaps. Just for fun, here are the categories established by 1) an exhibition; 2) an awards program; 3) a theory anthology; and 4) an accrediting board.

- 1) from *At the End of the Century: 100 Years of Architecture*
 Grand Plans at the Turn of the Century
 Colonialism in the Early Twentieth Century
 Manifestos for a New World
 Visions of a New Order
 Modern Learning and Living at the Bauhaus
 The Rational Kitchen
 Minimum Versus Maximum Houses
 The Garden City and the New Town
 "World Of Tomorrow": the Future of Transportation,
 the Politics of Monumentality
 Devastation and Reconstruction
 Creation of New Capitals
 Modernism at Mid-Century
 The Architecture of Ecology
 Structural Expressionism
 The Rise of Theory
 The Edge of Utopia
 Culture of Spectacle
 Mass-Produced Housing After World War II
 The House As an Aesthetic Laboratory
 The Skyscraper

- 2) from the 2000 AIA/CC Awards Program
 Affordable Housing
 Historic Preservation
 Design
 Firm
 Outstanding Individual Achievement (Maybeck)
 Allied Professions
 Community Housing Assistance
 Community Planning and Design
 Corporate Architect
 Excellence in Education
 Research and Technology
 Public Service
 Nature in the Built Environment (Nathaniel A. Owings)
 Lifetime Achievement

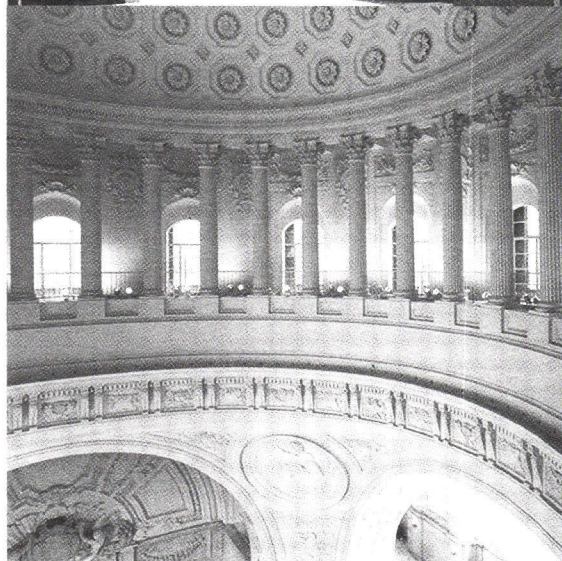
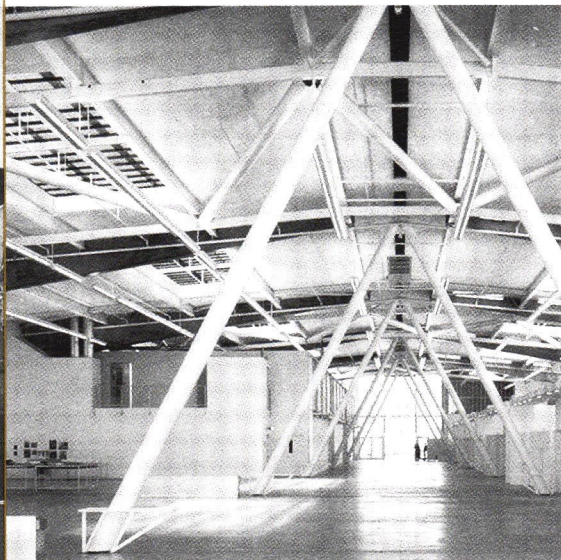
- 3) from Kate Nesbitt's *Theorizing a New Agenda: an Anthology of Architectural Theory, 1965-1995* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996)
 Phenomenology
 Aesthetic of the Sublime
 Linguistic Theory
 Marxism
 Feminism
 History and Historicism
 Meaning
 Place
 Urban Theory
 Political and Ethical Agendas
 The Body
 Typology
 The School of Venice
 Nature and Site
 Critical Regionalism
 Tectonic Expression

- 4) from the National Architectural Accrediting Board's *1998 Conditions and Procedures for Professional Degree Programs in Architecture*
 Verbal and Writing Skills
 Graphic Skills
 Research Skills
 Critical Thinking Skills
 Fundamental Design Skills
 Collaborative Skills
 Human Behavior
 Human Diversity
 Use of Precedents
 Western Traditions
 Non-Western Traditions
 National and Regional Traditions
 Environmental Conservation
 Accessibility
 Site Conditions
 Formal Ordering Systems
 Structural Systems
 Environmental Systems
 Life-Safety Systems
 Building Envelope Systems
 Building Service Systems
 Building Systems Integration
 Legal Responsibilities
 Building Code Compliance
 Building Materials and Assemblies
 Building Economics and Cost Control
 Detailed Design Development
 Technical Documentation
 Comprehensive Design
 Program Preparation
 The Legal Context of Architecture Practice
 Practice Organization and Management
 Contracts and Documentation
 Professional Internship
 Architects' Leadership Roles
 The Context of Architecture
 Ethics and Professional Judgement

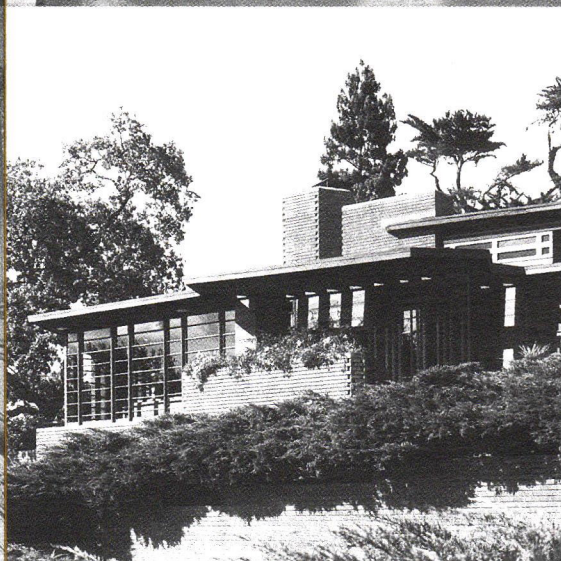
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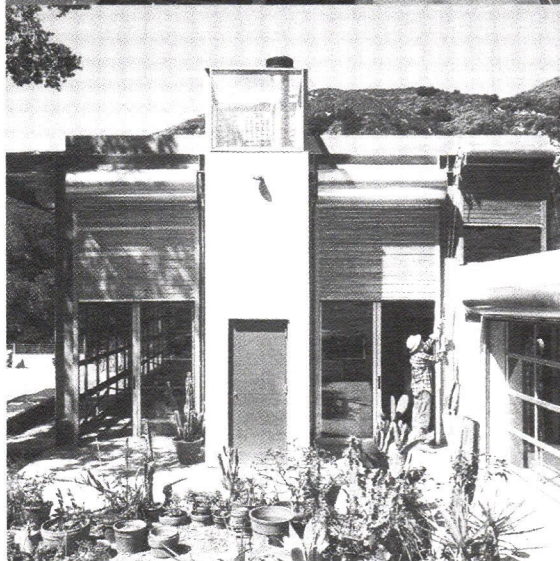
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AIACC 2000 Design Awards Winners

- 1 5th Street Family Housing, Santa Monica – Koning Elzenberg Architecture, Santa Monica
- 2 California College of Arts & Crafts, Montgomery Campus, San Francisco –
Tanner Leddy Maytum Stacy Architects, San Francisco
- 3 San Francisco City Hall, San Francisco – Associate Architects: Heller Manus Architects, San
Francisco; Komorous/Towey Architects, San Francisco; Finger/Moy Architects, San Francisco
- 4 Hanna House Seismic Strengthening and Rehabilitation, Stanford University –
Architectural Resources Group, San Francisco
- * Honor Awards: 2, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12; Merit Awards for Affordable Housing: 1, 13, 14;
Merit Awards for Historic Preservation: 3, 4; Merit Awards for Design: 5, 6, 8

arcCA is pleased to present here the Design Awards winners from the AIACC's 2000 Awards Program, each one a remarkable project. The Editorial Board selected six projects to explore in depth. (The small images will direct you to these articles, which follow.) The selections are not judgments about which are the better projects. Instead, they identify stories—like the sixteen-year political struggle that led to the realization of Moonridge Village—that particularly intrigued the Board. Had space allowed, we would have loved to write about all fourteen.

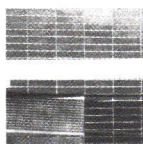
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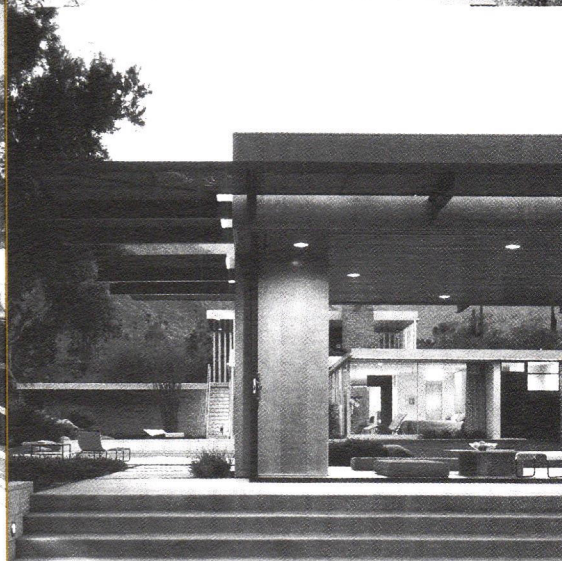
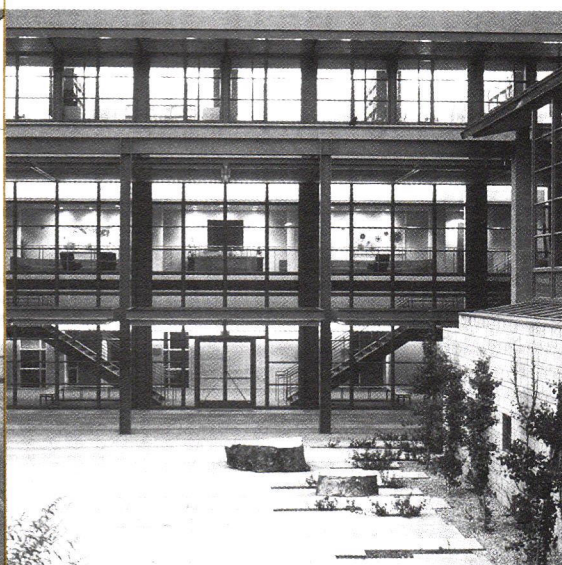


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5 Hergott Shepard Residence, Beverly Hills – Michael Maltzan Architecture, Inc., Los Angeles

6 Ron W. Burkle Family Building/Peter F. Drucker Graduate Management Center,
Claremont University – Anshen + Allen, Los Angeles

7 Myers Residence, Santa Barbara – Barton Myers Associates, Inc., Beverly Hills

8 Harris Pool House, Palm Springs – Marmol & Radziner Architects, Santa Monica

9 PS#1 Elementary School, pp. 32-33

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PS#1 Elementary School

Santa Monica

Koning Eizenberg Architecture, Santa Monica

Honor Award

Lisa Findley, AIA

Designing a school always raises the question of how a building in which learning takes place might also teach. With the 20,250 square foot first phase of their project for PS#1 in Santa Monica, Koning Eizenberg Architecture have answered this challenge in playful and sustainable ways.

Despite its name, PS#1 is a private, non-profit elementary school. The project is the first part of a three-phase Master Plan for the 175-student facility, spread over three lots, including one across an existing alley. The Master Plan knits the site together, using buildings to contain the playground. Only the first phase is complete, with Phase Two, the Library and Aftercare Facility, and Phase Three, a Multi-Purpose Activity Center, not yet underway, as the school considers buying adjacent property. Phase One, completed in January 1999 for just under \$100 per square foot, includes a two-story bar with seven classrooms, administrative offices, and a bridge linking two pieces of the site over the alley.

Koning Eizenberg held a number of workshops with the teaching staff and parents, as well as members of the local community. These were important influences in their thinking about the project. More profound, however, was their workshop with the children in which they realized that children are quite sophisticated in what they see and understand. It also became clear from this workshop that children are delighted by the way they move around, and they are sensitive to the size and nature of spaces they occupy.

As a direct result of this workshop, the architects integrated a range of spatial experiences and a variety of ways to move through the site. The buildings are activated by hyperbolic paraboloid roofs and façades that are layered with windows, louvers, and canopies over doors. The size of spaces and the length of walkways are broken down and varied by the pushing out of a wall or the change in the height of an overhead plane. The stairs shoot out at angles from the building,



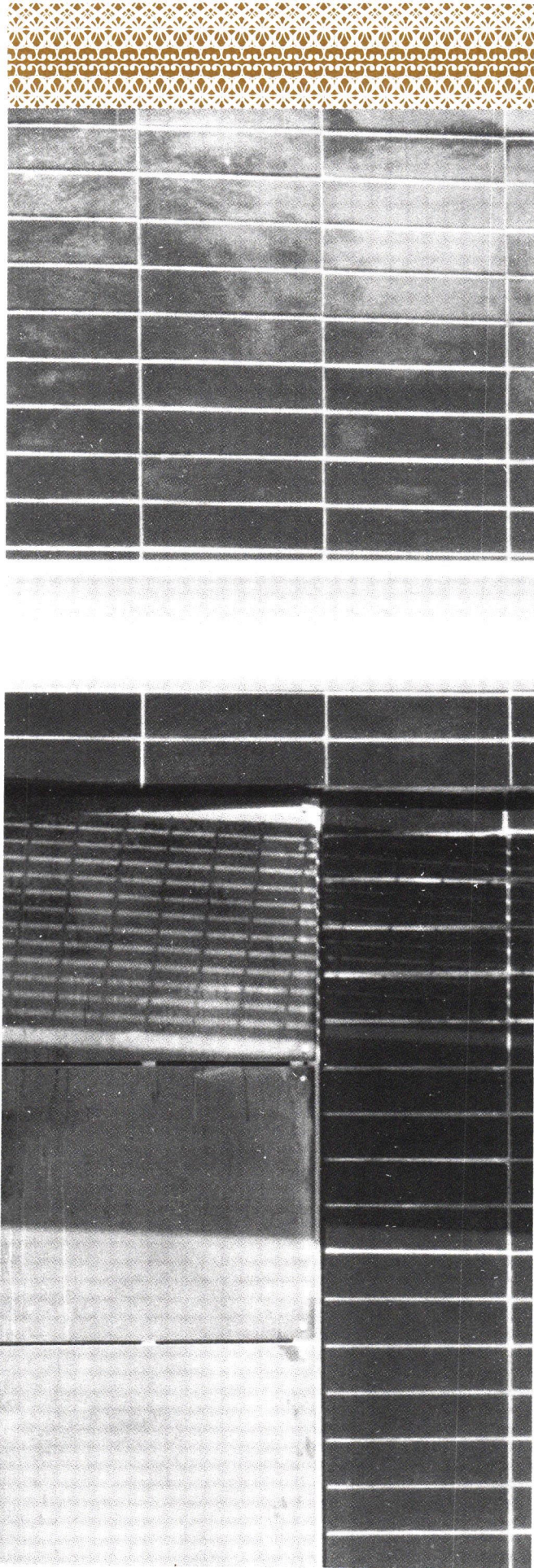
with one enclosed on both sides by walls and the other open with steel mesh guard rails. The bridge, which connects the site over the alley, is built like a fishing pier with cracks between the floor boards so the children can see the alley below. Movement is further activated by the play of light and shadow filtered through different materials in different places: wooden slats here, steel mesh or corrugated fiberglass there.

Rather than reduce the building to a series of recognizable childish icons, the architects decided to make it more like an artist's studio: spare to allow room to create, filled with daylight, and straightforward and expressive in its structural expression. The project is playful as it teaches. Along the ground floor classrooms, big round concrete columns hold up steel I-beams that hold up the framing for the second story balcony. Inside the classrooms, exposed steel web joists make clear how the ceiling is supported. Students can easily understand how the buildings are held up and how materials are connected together.

As with all their projects, the firm incorporated green building practices. They eliminated air-conditioning, much to the concern of the head of the school, who insisted that the infrastructure for air-conditioning be built into the building. However, the passive tactics of insulation, cross ventilation, and passive shading by louvers and vegetation work perfectly. Other environmentally sensitive strategies, including low emission and non-toxic and non-allergenic materials, were also used, particularly in the classrooms, and recycled plastics were used for the exterior benches. In this way, the building serves as a demonstration project for both the children and the community at large.

The unusual spaces of the school provoke the students to think about their surroundings. With PS#1, Koning Eizenberg have won not only the approval of their peers, as indicated by the AIACC's Honor Award, but also the approval of much tougher critics, the students. For the end of the school year celebration in June, the students did enthusiastic drawings of their favorite places in the building. The architects are proudly scanning these drawings into their website. ●





El Sereno Recreation Center/ Indoor Pool

Los Angeles

Cannon Dworsky, Los Angeles

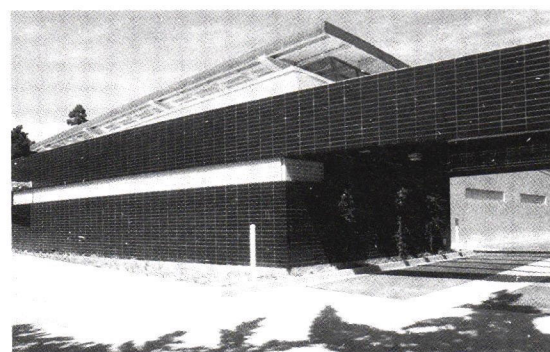
Honor Award

Lisa Padilla, AIA

A common media representation of Los Angeles juxtaposes the skyscrapers of Bunker Hill against the San Gabriels, a privileged vantage seen from a helicopter or blimp, one that conceals as much as it reveals. Hidden from view are a number of working-class communities that developed in the hills east of Chinatown in close proximity to the region's original industrial core along the Los Angeles River. El Sereno is one of these communities, a place defined by modest housing, local schools, and a neighborhood park, the latter a treasured remnant of open space. Many residents can walk to the park, which is in the geographic center of this roughly two square-mile district in the City of Los Angeles. In 1930, the city's Playground and Recreation Department oversaw construction of the El Sereno Plunge, a municipal pool, bathhouse, and community center completed at a cost of \$50,000. It was one of sixteen such facilities, respites for children and adolescents in need of "mental refreshment." Here, trained staff offered classes in swimming, diving, and lifesaving, and under their watchful eyes the children of immigrants might become healthy citizens.

In 1995, Cannon Dworsky, a Los Angeles design firm, received a commission to replace the 1930 Plunge with an up-to-date, year-round, indoor facility. The project sponsor, Councilman Richard Alatorre, was about to leave office, and the new complex was intended as his legacy for the district. According to Mehrdad Yazdani, design principal at Cannon Dworsky, the Councilman presented the firm with a rendering drawn in the style of a familiar, taco-making fast food chain.

With assistance from the city's Department of Recreation and Parks, the design team worked closely with Hispanic residents and community leaders in meetings and public workshops. Yazdani looked to the natural landscape surrounding the park as a primary design cue. Two elements, a one-story structure with multi-purpose rooms and lockers

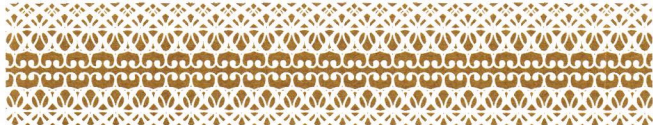


and the indoor pool itself, are housed beneath a graceful, sloping roof element mimicking the adjacent hills. The Department of Recreation and Parks expressed concern regarding the project's initial cost and maintenance requirements. Local youth would need to be dissuaded from tagging the new facility. The team selected a combination of ceramic tile, metal panel, and painted plaster for the building's exterior walls. Views to the outside were preserved with clerestory windows and, facing the park, with a large, open-air wall, which could be enclosed during winter days with translucent rolling panels.

During project development, residents expressed mixed views about the building's design. Younger members of the community believed the facility should have a dynamic form and reflect a newer El Sereno. The older members appreciated the familiar, mission-style references depicted in the Councilman's preliminary rendering. These contrasting views were eventually resolved as long-term residents came to appreciate the design team's functional layout and then began to value the formal merits of the design.

Cannon Dworsky collaborated with landscape architect Calvin Abe on the integration of the building into the existing park. The park's simple landscape of grass and jacaranda trees is pulled up to the buildings' adjacent face. Low-shade planting preserves views from the indoor pool to the park and baseball fields beyond. Colorful, drought-tolerant ground planting was selected along the sunny, west-facing entry, in striking contrast to the deep blue tile walls that suggest the aquatic environment inside.

Today, the Department of Recreation and Parks has been charged with upgrading facilities throughout Los Angeles. Most of these projects will be funded by a combination of existing funds and newly approved state and local bonds. The El Sereno Recreation Center and Indoor Pool project signals a readiness by the city and its residents for adventurous architectural expression in public facilities during this time. Architects and landscape architects should have increasing opportunities to partner with communities throughout Los Angeles, in a collaborative effort to build recreational spaces that can be enjoyed by all. ●



Conference Barn

Middleburg, Virginia

Sant Architects, Inc., Venice

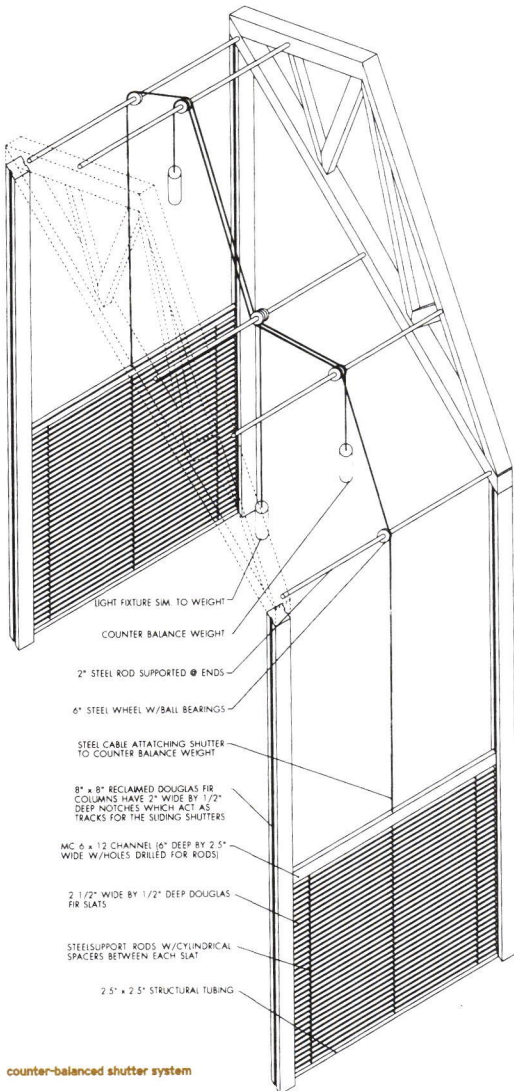
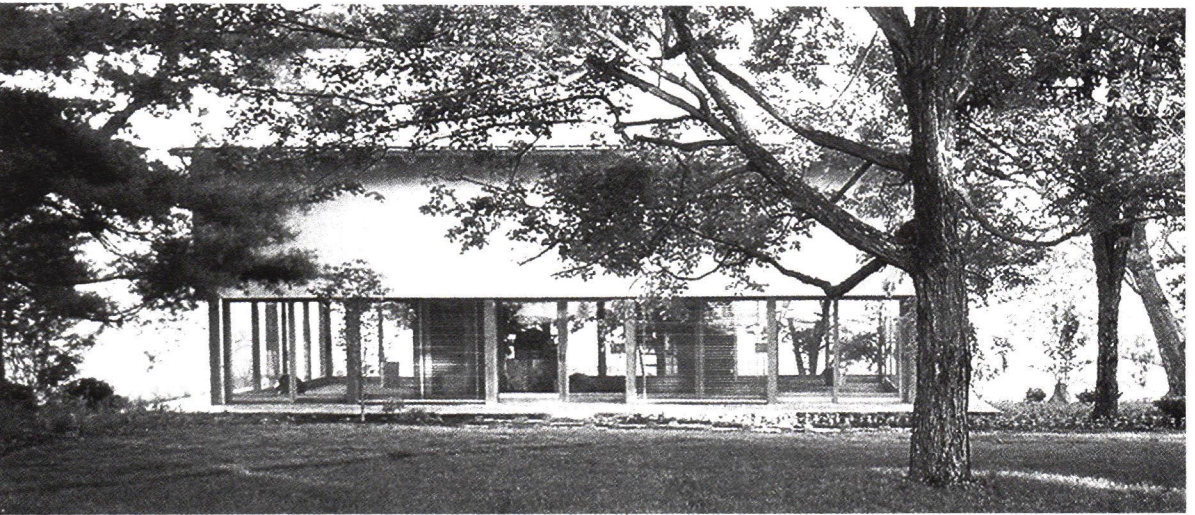
Honor Award

Anne Zimmerman, AIA

Sometimes, it's tough to get even your own family to hire you. Initially, the parents of Michael Sant, AIA, of Sant Architects hired another architect to design a conference and office building for their non-profit foundation, which focuses on population and environmental issues. The scheme that resulted was very formal, and Sant was asked to comment on the proposal. He needed to assuage his parents' concerns that, if retained, he wasn't going to design a wild, Venice kind of building. Ultimately, the Sants did hire their son to design, for their 150 acre property in Virginia horse country, a structure that would relate an existing Miesian glass house with a traditional barn and provide them with office and meeting space.

The challenge of the distant site seems to have been easily bridged; Sant Architects handled all architectural services including permits and plan check. Over the two years it took to build the project (due to the not uncommon reluctance of the contractor to build atypical but well-thought-out details), Sant and colleague Jason Teague made a total of five trips to Virginia. To prod and inspire the original general contractor, Sant's brother-in-law, Dan Plummer of Plummer Construction, brought a "can do" enthusiasm to the construction of the building.

Though not designed primarily as a "green" building, elements of appropriate technology wend their way through the design. The bluestone slab is radiantly heated, and natural cross ventilation allows the air conditioning to be used only rarely. Slatted shutters provide privacy and control solar gain. The roof and wall panels achieve an R-value of 30. Reclaimed timber columns and trusses from mills and factories provide a rustic richness. The steel roof is coated with a lead free, zinc and tin based coating. The dual-glazed sliding doors and skylight are low-E tempered glass, and the lift-and-slide hardware creates a tight weather seal, preventing wasteful infiltration.



counter-balanced shutter system



Maintaining a professional posture is sometimes difficult when the clients are your parents, according to Sant. There were tensions about the size and scale of the building, which now seem ideal to everyone. The lively acoustics of the building are a surprise success; music sounds incredible in the building.

The end result is a beautifully detailed, elegantly proportioned and sited building, designed with environmental sensitivity, blending the simplicity of traditional Japanese design and precise Miesian detailing with the rustic qualities of traditional American barns. ●



Downtown Homeless Drop-in Center

Los Angeles

Michael B. Lehrer, AIA, Lehrer Architects,
Los Angeles, with F. Ameen, Los Angeles

Honor Award

Anne Zimmerman, AIA

Intrigue, politics, mayoral and political support (or interference, depending on the point of view), input by a developer/contractor friend of the mayor's, project delays, personal conflicts, a multi-headed client and stakeholder team that boggles the mind, function as controversy, color as controversy: who could ask for a more dynamic, fascinating and ultimately more important project?

Owned by the Los Angeles Homeless Shelter Authority (LAHSA), a city agency, developed by Single Room Occupancy Housing Corporation, funded by HUD, operated by Volunteers of America (VOA), and adopted by the Mayor as a "pet" project, it is a complex beast.

The project's context, Skid Row, is an intense, *Bladerunner* kind of place to the uninitiated. People and their belongings are everywhere. There isn't much car traffic and people wander aimlessly or sprawl on the sidewalk in the shade. Trash, weird objects, and unpleasant smells proliferate.

Over the years, Skid Row's single room occupancy hotels (SRO's) have been significantly upgraded. Many are thoughtfully designed by talented architects. Several missions and parks serve the neighborhood's homeless. Until now, however, there has never been anything like the Homeless Drop-In Center. Initially criticized by some activists in the Skid Row community as a "concentration camp," a deceitful vehicle to herd and eliminate the homeless, it is instead a sanctuary, an oasis, and a respite from the street. The Center is about kindness and human dignity, and it is beautiful, working with the material and budget limitations of durability, maintenance, and affordability. It has also been recognized by an AIA/LA Award of Merit, an LA Business Council Beautification Award, and an AIA/Concrete Masonry Institute top award.

The Center was designed to serve about 200 people per day. Approximately 800 to 1500 people now use the Center on a daily basis. A staff of 35 provides whatever

services a guest might want. Nothing is forced on the guests, but a climate of “health realization” is promoted in which an individual’s assets are identified and nurtured. People are encouraged into transitional housing and into mainstream society. Food is not served; instead, guests are encouraged to utilize the nearby downtown missions for meals.

Bud Hayes, CEO/Executive Director of Single Room Occupancy Housing Corporation, conceived the Los Angeles Downtown Homeless Drop-In Center on a napkin during lunch with Associate Executive Director Jeffrey Gilbert and architect Farooq Ameen, AIA, who later turned the design of the project over to Michael Lehrer, AIA. Hayes told those present he wanted a Mediterranean courtyard, lots of green, lots of open space, and a water feature.

The result is a welcoming and noncontrolling place for the homeless to congregate, shower, hang-out, store their belongings, and sleep for up to 8 hours. It was accomplished with an \$850,000 construction budget (out of a \$1.2 million project budget) and designed and built in 18 months. It is mostly an outdoor place, a working courtyard. The 8,500 square foot, U-shaped plan houses 32 dorm style beds (8 of which serve women and families), bathing, a “Clubhouse” multi-purpose room, administrative, health services and counseling offices, storage for belongings and laundry—all wrapping the 6,500 SF courtyard. The courtyard provides a variety of places, perspectives, and pathways and defines the architecture. Outdoor sleeping is allowed. Light and color are the medium of the architecture; vertical latticework, arcades, palm trees and trellises create changing patterns of sunlight and shade. More shade is needed, however, and shade trees would have made a great addition to the palms.

There is no gate, though the City fought for one. The Center is open 24/7, so none was needed, and the developer eliminated it from the plans with a stroke of a pen at the 11th hour. The color scheme, which was a critical element of the design, was “nuked” by the developer, who sensed negative reactions to test colors from guests and those in power in the city. Graphic designer Adelle Bass tried to respect the value of the architect’s colors while changing them, with input from her peers in the Graphic Design Department at Art Center College of Design. Hayes has subsequently indicated a willingness to try the architect’s color scheme when the building needs to be repainted.

There is no pressure here to behave a certain way or to participate in anything. There are no strings attached. As long as guests are not violent, they are welcomed by the Center. This is a place about and for people, one that allows people simply to be themselves. As Arthur Fox, one of the

guests I chatted with, said, “This is the greatest thing that ever happened to Skid Row; living in the open can get pretty hectic.”

The philosophical questions of the morality of homelessness in our society baffle the mind, as do the numbers: 80,000 homeless in Los Angeles County, including 30,000 in downtown LA and 8,000 in Skid Row. Though there will always be some people who have adapted and prefer the street, many of the homeless are on the street because of mental illness, substance abuse, or poverty, and they need options and support. A true continuum of care and facilities for people needing help does not exist in this society, though it has been envisioned by those actually involved in serving the homeless. Many more such oases are needed to provide a safe, enjoyable, and nurturing environment for the homeless in LA and elsewhere. ●





Moonridge Village

Half Moon Bay

David Baker FAIA & Associates, San Francisco
Merit Award for Affordable Housing

Tim Culvahouse, AIA

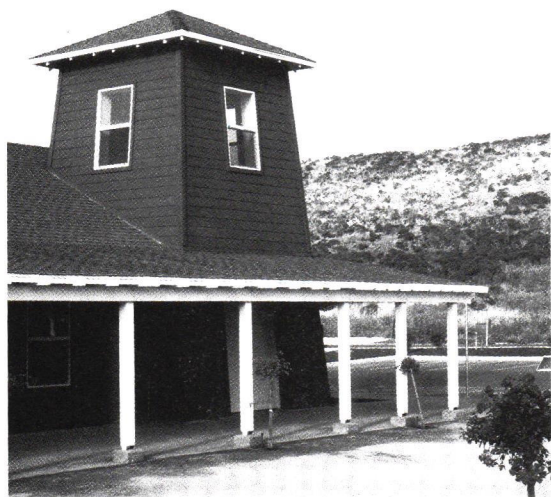
Mention "Silicon Valley," and the last thing people think of is impoverished farm workers. Just over the hills from Woodside, however, along the coast of wealthy San Mateo County, farm workers' families live in broken down trailers and makeshift shacks, or squeezed twelve together into two-bedroom apartments.

In 1983, in response to these dismal housing conditions, County Supervisor (now Congresswoman) Anna Eshoo proposed development of a 40 acre valley just east of Highway 1 below Half Moon Bay. Sixteen years later, after innumerable challenges, Moonridge Village opened in September 1999, providing homes for 80 families out of thousands who had applied by lottery. In 2001, 80 more units will complete the plan.

From the outset, the project faced difficult hurdles: lack of water and available sewer capacity and a lawsuit by the local school district, in addition to the typical scarcity of funds. After extended negotiations, a water supply was secured through an agreement between the county and the water district to bring a pipeline seven miles over the mountains from Crystal Springs.

Sewage treatment proved more difficult. With stunning irony, environmentalists blocked the use of an environmentally impeccable, on-site treatment plant that would have helped recharge the aquifer and would have provided new freshwater habitat, because such a system would have obviated one of the most effective limits to coastal development: sewer capacity. Faced with stiff fines for existing inadequacies, local sewer districts eventually provided increased capacity that accommodated the development conventionally.

Meanwhile, the local school district filed suit, seeking an assessment on the development of \$20 per square foot, arguing that it was bringing new students into the district. Ultimately, the developer was able to demonstrate that the

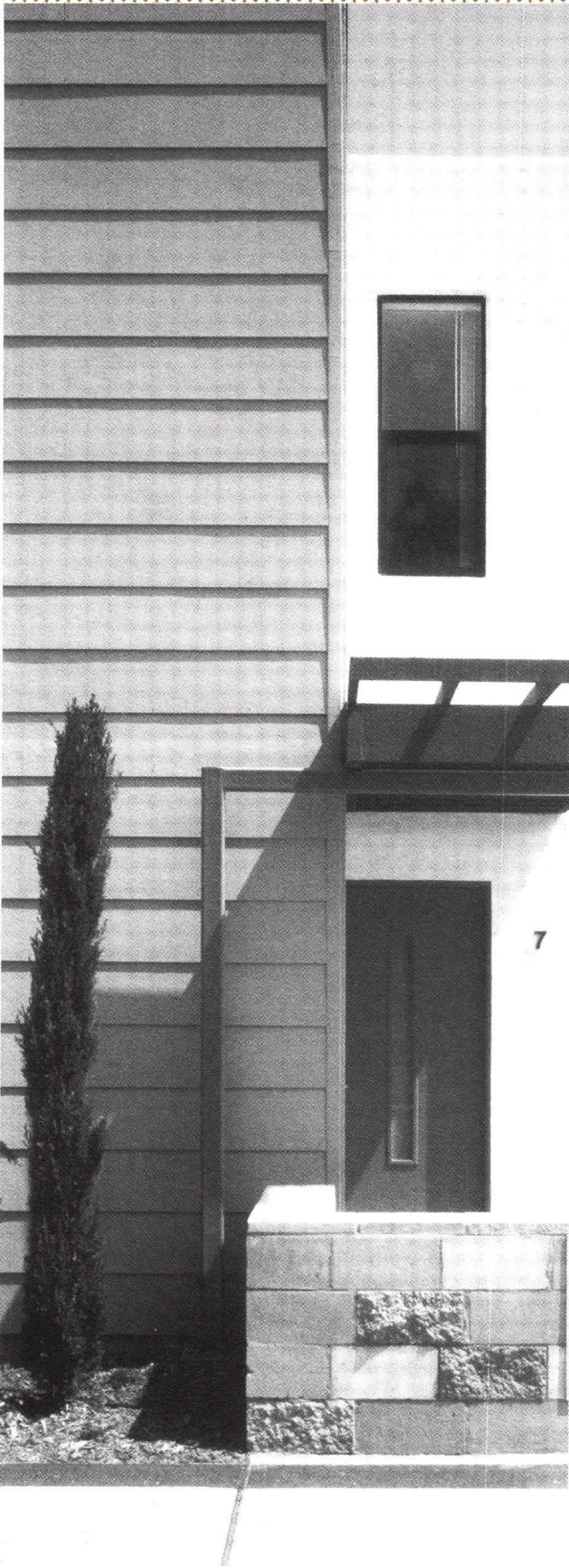


students were already there; they were just living in substandard housing.

Through all the challenges, the developer, Mid-Peninsula Housing Coalition, remained steadfast and, working with David Baker FAIA & Associates, brought a successful project to fruition. Baker combines four unit types in numerous duplex and fourplex configurations to squeeze considerable variety out of what is necessarily a repetitive scheme. Each unit has its own front porch and back yard, and the complex is formed around a series of community gardens, citrus groves, and tot lots. Community facilities, including laundry, day-care, computer lab, post office, and community room and kitchen, surround a central *zocalo*, or plaza, five-minute's walk from the furthest dwelling. A soccer field, basketball court and inline skating court anchor the end of the development nearest Highway 1.

Mid-Peninsula Housing does not just build and manage buildings. With the help of Cabrillo Adult Education and the College of San Mateo, they are offering on-site English and computer courses. Sor Juana Inez, a counseling service for Latina women, has on-site programs, as does the Corporation for Therapeutic Convivials, which brings the village men together around the community gardens. Programs for children include Coast Side Head Start, which is headquartered at Moonridge, and a Summer Enrichment Program.

Moonridge Village has won not only an AIACC Merit Award, but also a Tax Credit Excellence Award from the Affordable Housing Tax Credit Coalition. Fran Wagstaff, Executive Director of MPHCC, says that these awards lend credibility to their effort to demonstrate comparability with market rate quality—to produce housing that is not (as is too often considered appropriate) merely “good enough for *those* people.” What is she proudest of? “It’s wonderful for children.” ●



Eleventh Avenue Townhomes

Escondido

Studio E Architects, San Diego

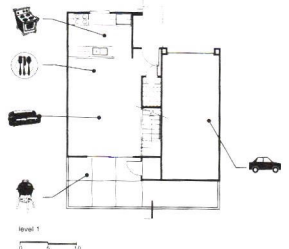
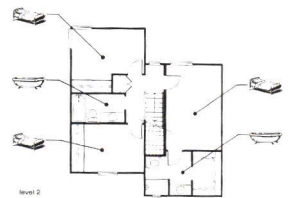
Merit Award for Affordable Housing

Buzz Yudell, FAIA

Eric Naslund, AIA, and John Sheehan speak of their work with quiet intensity and clarity of purpose. They stress their endeavor to provide "good housing for people of modest means," and they think of housing as an "armature for people's lives," one that can help the disadvantaged to "get back on course or get a leg up." Housing is about "serving a bigger purpose and not just net worth."

As strong as their social commitment are their energy and talent in crafting places of dignity and great design integrity. For them, this is a thoughtful process of understanding the place and working from fundamental principles of climate, materials, and social interaction. Their design exploration is based on "mining the rituals and phenomena of everyday life and finding the poetry in it."

The award-winning Eleventh Avenue Townhomes represents their fifth housing project in Escondido and their third affordable project in its neighborhood. Sixteen two-story rental townhomes are organized along mews in a compact infill site. The narrow, 100-foot frontage on Eleventh Avenue provides the connection between the project and its neighborhood. The tree-lined entry lane serves pedestrian and auto access and encourages informal socializing. A plaza is created midway along this path where a meeting hall, inspired by barn construction, fronts a



landscaped courtyard and an informal lawn with children's play areas. At the far end of the three hundred foot long lot is an additional common area with overflow parking and allotment gardens for citrus and vegetables.

The site planning is inspired by such precedents as Southern California bungalow courtyards and London mews. The designers have skillfully deployed the density of 23 dwelling units per acre to achieve an environment that is rich enough to inspire a sense of community yet breathes enough to allow for individual pride and identity. At the core of this success is their understanding and fluency in creating a fine-grained hierarchy of spaces from the communal to the private. Toward this end they have made every element count. While the plans are straightforward and quite flexible, expressive elements skillfully function in multiple ways. Cantilevered canopies are both sunshades and identifiers. Garden walls establish both front porches and back yards.

Sustainability is enhanced by the most basic planning decisions. Spaces are configured to allow for cross-ventilation. Setbacks and sun-shades are carefully composed, and landscaped living spaces are integral to the plan.

Tight budgeting is handled by early planning, prioritizing, and direct expression of materials rather than by successive rounds of value engineering. Tough materials are selected for their durability and expressive potential. The initial planning considers such economies as short spans and clear, repetitive geometries. The architects are interested and inspired by everyday buildings like barns and factories. The integrity and durability of this esthetic yields buildings strong enough to allow people to inhabit and modify their environments without compromising the architecture. Naslund notes that their housing "doesn't require that geraniums be specified six inches on center," but that varied planting and furnishings add richness to the community. At the same time, the architects and their clients focused in detail on designing for every need: from the back-yard barbecue and place for briquette storage to the single car garages, which can be used for home-based work.

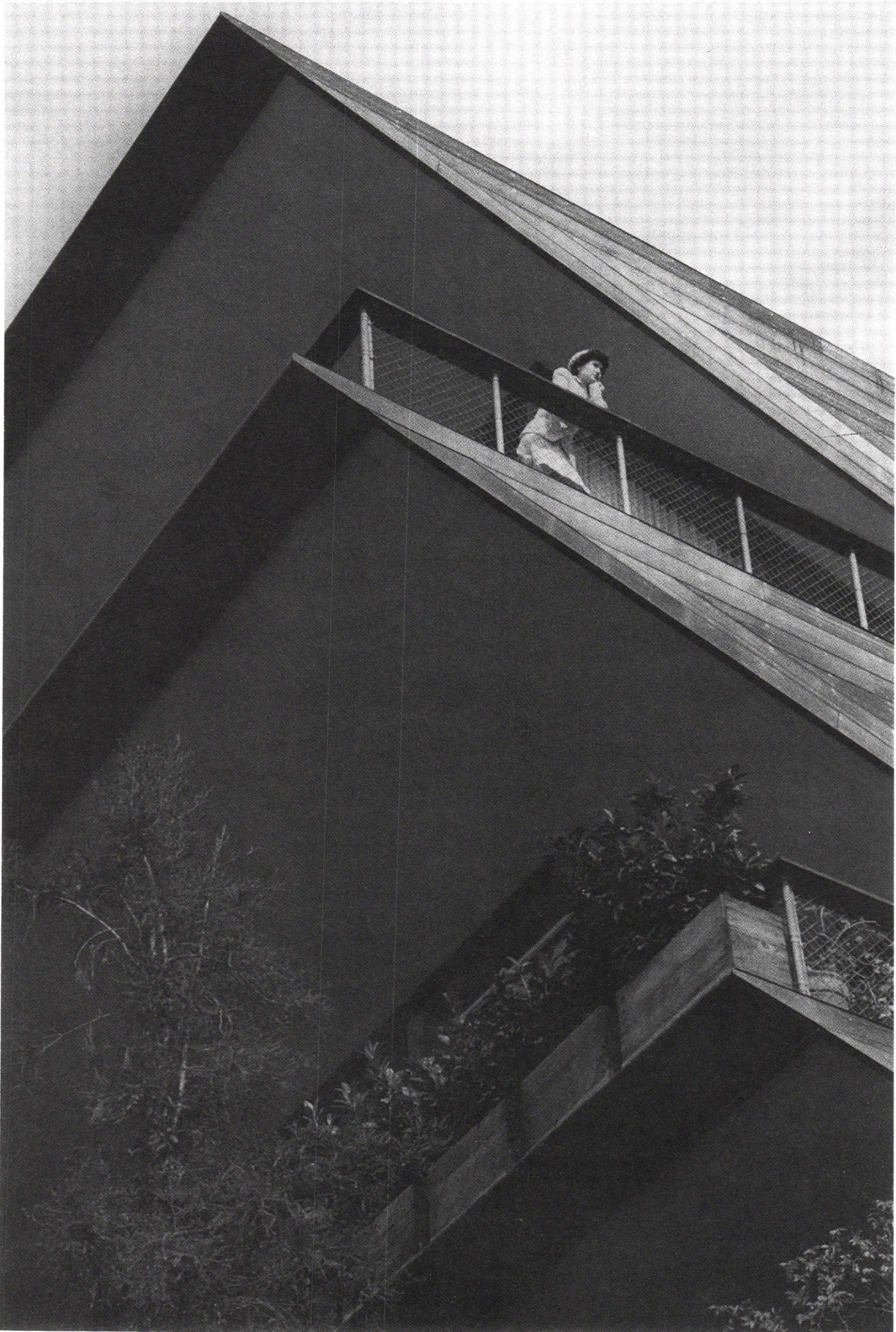
Ironically, the collaboration with a non-profit housing organization provided more design freedom than market housing. The budget was comparable to market rate projects, but because the client, SER/Jobs for Progress, will own the project indefinitely, there was more concern about durability. This allowed for a tougher but richer palette than market projects: varied color CMU walls, exterior concrete clapboards, expressed trusses in the community building. Sheehan notes that this long-term and focused commitment avoids the need to design a project that is "all things to all people—a vanilla



design." Instead, the team could work from a detailed understanding of the users' needs to design a project that "fits like a hand in glove."

One measure of a successful fit is the positive reception by the inhabitants. To cultivate pride of place, they organized a competition to rename the project. Tenants and local school children participated and the Eleventh Avenue Townhomes were rechristened Emerald Gardens: a sign of pride and hope. A more ironic indicator of the project's success is the apparent concern of some for-profit developers who feel that the Studio E affordable housing has been "raising the bar" in ways that may reflect negatively on the quality of their own projects.

Studio E Architects exhibit an all too rare set of commitments and skills. They have shown a dedication to place, community, and craft and translated this dedication into eloquent projects that enhance the lives of the inhabitants. They have chosen to work from fundamental principles, eschewing the seduction of elaborate form-making. Their work reminds us that the social values of architecture can be realized while satisfying the soul with the poetics of place. ●



Havens House

Forgotten Masterpiece
of California Modernism

John Loomis, AIA

High in the hills above Berkeley sits a forgotten masterpiece of California modern architecture, the Weston Havens House of 1941 by Harwell Hamilton Harris. Its presence can barely be detected. It merges with the landscape, nestled in the treetops against a steeply inclined slope, around which winds Panoramic Way. At one time it was a highly acclaimed example of California modern architecture. In fact, in 1957, to commemorate the centennial of the AIA, *Architectural Record* conducted a survey of fifty important architects and scholars and produced a list of the one hundred most significant works of architecture in the United States. Among them were fourteen houses. Harris's Havens house tied for ninth place with Richard Neutra's Lovell Health House. One juror compared the Havens House in significance to Wright's Falling Water for its original and dramatic response to site. Yet, while Falling Water and the Lovell House have assumed prominent places in the canon of modern architecture, the Weston Havens House has not. Its reputation has receded into history much in the way its architecture has receded into the landscape.

Architecture today is largely preoccupied with form, with the creation of the smartly designed



object. For Harris, however, the design of the Havens House was not about formal manipulation, but instead about a spatial response to site and path. The visitor engages this architecture experientially, and a memorable experience it is. The seven-foot high redwood wall, now covered with Boston ivy, and the simple, carved volume of the two-car garage present an understated, almost anonymous façade to the street, obscuring any direct view of the house. The entrance, a portion of the fence at a right angle to the street, is easily missed. This entry opens up to a path perpendicular to the street that is actually a covered bridge leading to the house. The high, inclined sides of this bridge reveal only the sky and block the view below, leaving the visitor temporarily disoriented. The axis of the bridge continues through the front door under a low ceiling and ends in a freestanding wall. If the visitor turns to the right or left or goes down the stair, the more intimate spaces of the kitchen and bedrooms are found, as well as the sunken court, hidden from view by the inclined sides of the bridge. To proceed along the axis, the visitor must circumvent the freestanding wall, beyond which the ceiling lifts upward, and a dramatic, 180-degree panorama of the San Francisco Bay emerges. The viewer then stands directly on axis with the distant Golden Gate Bridge, the final visual destination of a masterful architectural promenade.

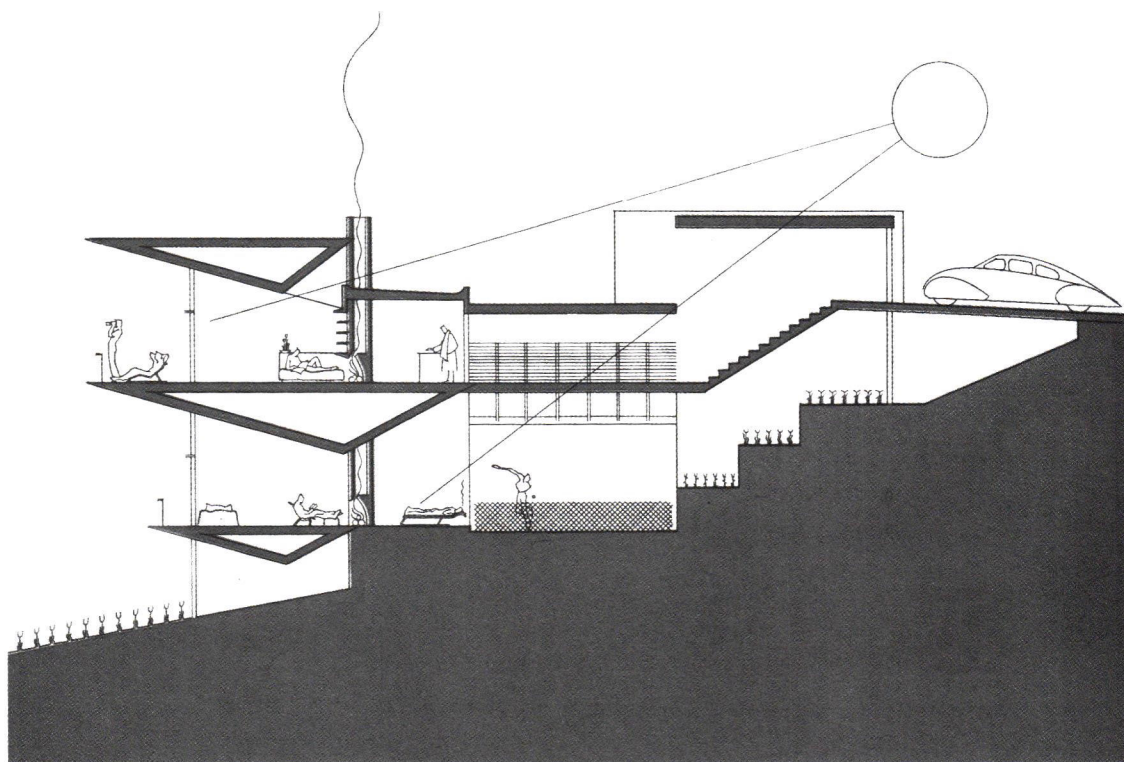
The formal moves that shape this experience are not immediately perceived. The house consists of two volumes, separated by a court and linked by a bridge. One volume, with the maid's apartment and the garage, is anchored to the upper part of the slope along the street. The other volume thrusts out from the slope, into the view. This second volume is comprised of three inverted trusses,

stacked vertically, that open outward to the view. These vertically stacked roof/ceiling assemblies respond both to form and function. The inclined ceiling formed by the truss directs the space of the room toward the view. Meanwhile, the interiors of the truss structure serve as plenums for the radiant heating. In addition, the upper truss contains hidden clerestory windows that filter direct morning light and indirect afternoon light into the main room. The section is the key to this design.

This sectionally driven scheme represents an interesting departure from Harris's previous work. Harris's career was still in its formative stages. He had worked under Neutra's tutelage from 1929 to 1932. Nevertheless, the predominant influence on his work was Frank Lloyd Wright, tempered by an intuitive affinity for California's Arts and Crafts movement, with occasional references to Neutra. The Depression provided a few opportunities for Harris to test his talent. Despite the economic deprivations, he produced a respectable body of residential work, including the Pauline Lowe House (Altadena, 1934), the Fellowship Park House (Los Angeles, 1935), the Helene Kershner House (Los Angeles, 1935), the De Steiguer House (Pasadena, 1936), the Greta Ganstedt House (Hollywood, 1938), and the Pumphrey House (Santa Monica, 1939).

Harris was the master of the well-solved plan, and despite the individual differences among the work of this period, Harris's houses, even those on slopes, are predominantly conceived in plan. The John Entenza House (Santa Monica, 1937), for example, thrusts out boldly into Santa Monica Canyon, but is essentially a one-story scheme. The Lee Blair House (Los Angeles, 1939), completed the year Harris began to design the Havens House, shows more volumetric development as a scheme of three interlocking trays stepping down the hillside. Yet none of the sloped sites previously encountered by Harris were as physically challenging or dramatic as the Panoramic Way site. Here, Harris was forced to abandon his plan-driven repertoire for a section strategy that also forced him to leave behind the residual influences of Wright and Neutra. The result was his most original work of architecture.

The larger site of Panoramic Hill may also have inspired the path that takes one into and through the house. The developer of the first



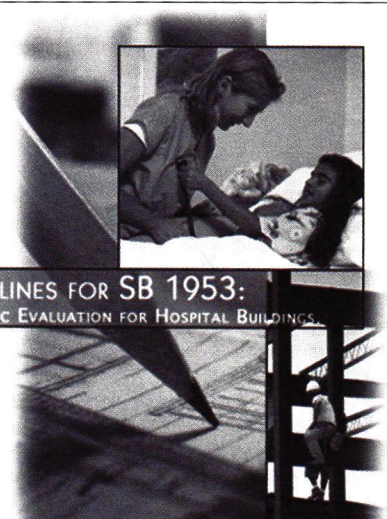
Panoramic Hill residences, Warren Cheny, had commissioned landscape architect Henry Atkins in 1909 to design a path named Orchard Lane to connect the shingled houses of the early development. Orchard Lane is really a series of stairs that acts as a vertical warp to the switchback weave of Panoramic Way. The stairs alternately are enveloped within deeply shaded, leafy bowers and emerge into the light as they intersect the road. Harris no doubt trudged up this steep and dramatic climb many times as he became acquainted with the site. Could it be that the path up the hill, with its compression and release, its transitions from shade to light, inspired the path through the house?

Dramatic site conditions were one reason for the uniqueness of the Havens House within Harris's career; another was his unique relationship with his client, John Weston Havens, Jr., who happily inhabits the house to this day. Harris and Havens had much in common. Born just four months apart, both were descendants of California pioneer stock. They shared the heritage of an Anglo-American California that valued individualism and pragmatism, a California viewed as a place apart, distinct from the rest of the country. During their youth, California retained an evident, if nostalgic, memory of

its pioneer past. For these two men, this memory played a strong role in the formation of their identities. At the same time, they were both intellectually committed to a vision of modernism that was distinctly Californian. Their shared heritage and shared values created a bond that became a lifelong friendship.

As a result of this friendship, Havens's relationship with Harris was one of an engaged and critically involved client. In fact, Havens rejected Harris's first scheme, an unremarkable, plan-driven proposal that stepped down the slope with none of the sectional brilliance of the final project. For Havens, the scheme occupied too much space and seemed too extravagant. He compelled Harris to completely rethink the design. The result is the undisputed highpoint of Harris's career and a masterpiece of California modernism.


The Havens House celebrates the experiential and the tactile over the formal. It represents a unique moment of cultural optimism when California sought to develop a distinct modernist vision. Moreover, the Havens House represents a creative synergy between a talented architect and an intelligent client that inspired the architect to transcend his own creative boundaries. ●



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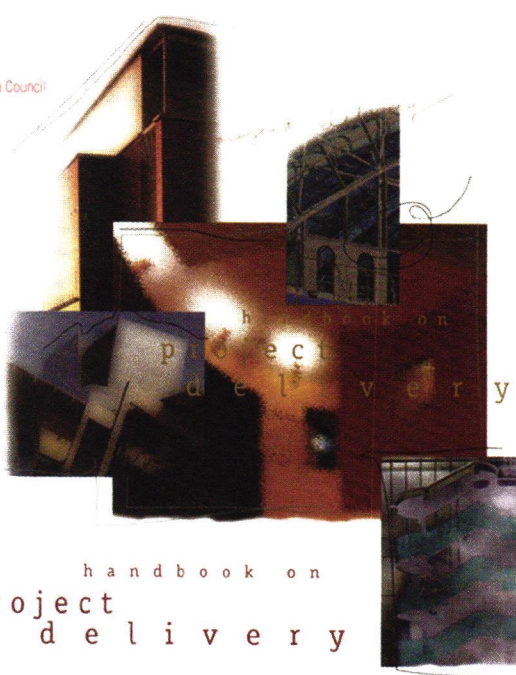
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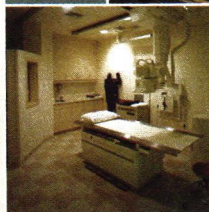
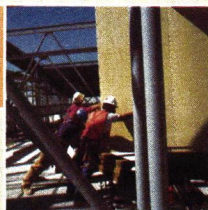
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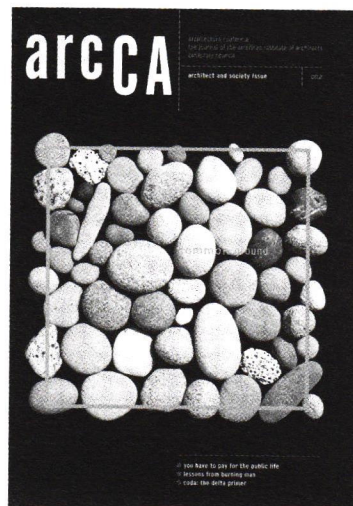
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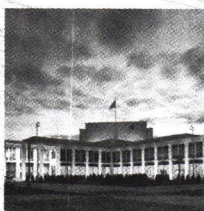
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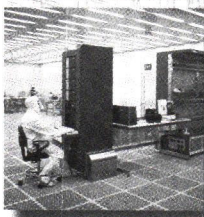
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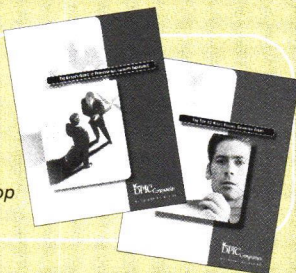


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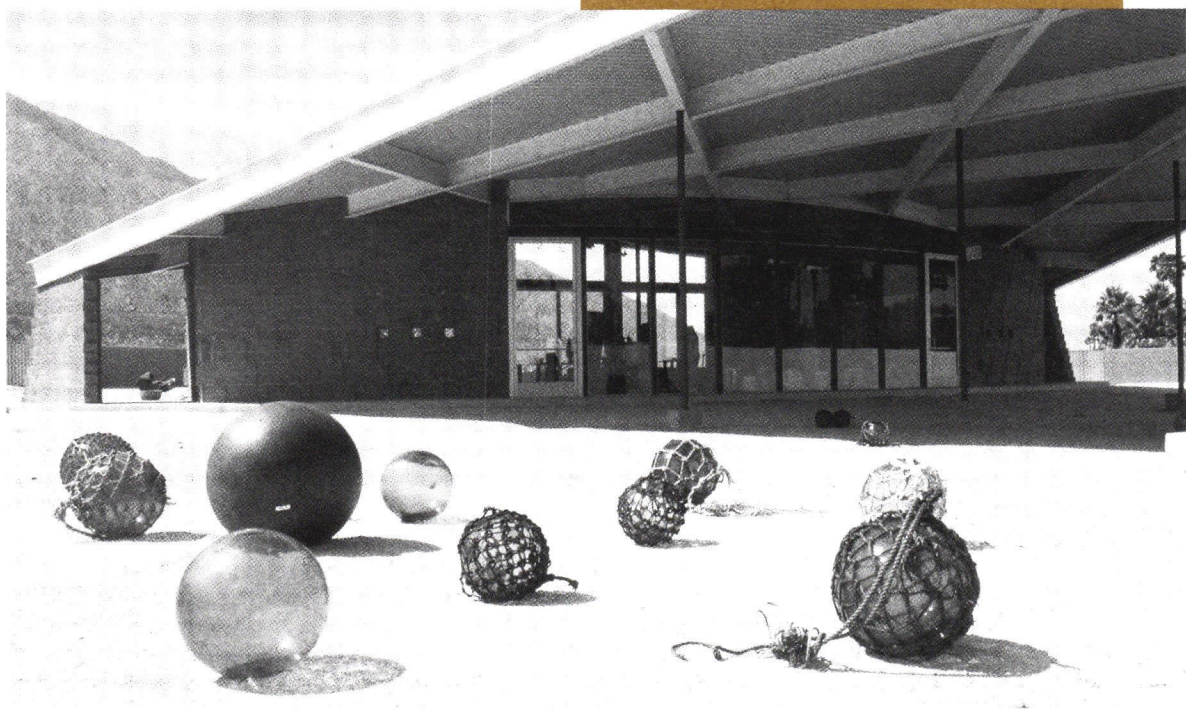
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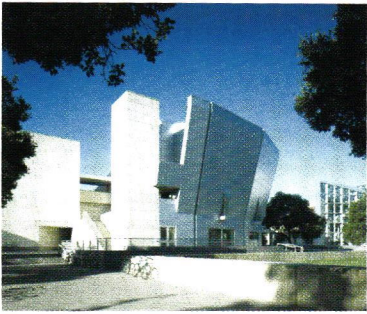
Coda



Lisa Padilla, AIA

Anyone who has entered Palm Springs from metropolitan Los Angeles via Highway 111 has probably taken notice of the unofficial, yet much recognized, gateway to the desert region of the Coachella Valley: a structural sculpture comprised of a wing-like roof perched on slender pipe columns and concrete block walls the shade of red desert rock. This structure, more roadside monument than building, was designed as a gas station by architect Albert Frey (1903-1998) and sat uninhabited for years. Frey, a protege of Le Corbusier, settled in Palm Springs in the 1930's and became renowned for residential and commercial buildings that have become the staple of a style popularly known as "Desert Modern."

Recently, the building was purchased and carefully renovated into a private art gallery, "Montana St. Martin." A striking white wall now encloses the structure and an outdoor sculpture garden, while allowing the signature roofline, still visible from the highway, to hover. Large expanses of glazing now enclose the original portals for the station garage. Frey's thoughtful patterning of concrete block creates a refined interior where any mechanic (or art dealer) would be proud to work. ●

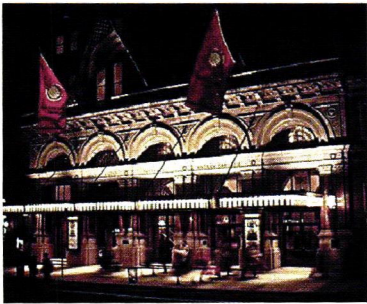


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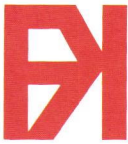
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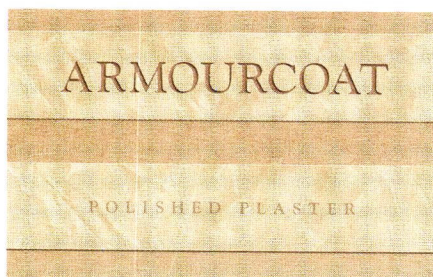


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